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ABSTRACT

These six theme-oriented newsletter issues present specific curriculum planning ideas and activities for teachers of young children. The theme of the January/February 1996 issue is "Children's Literature." This issue focuses on library utilization, props, telling and creating stories, and bookmaking for children. The theme of the March/April 1996 issue is "People in the Neighborhood." It focuses on careers and jobs for kids, bringing in special visitors, neighborhood field trips, and a classroom restaurant. The May/June 1996 issue's theme is "Spring Creativity." This issue focuses on exploring the arts outdoors, springtime recipes, spring field trips, and problem solving with toddlers. The theme of the July/August 1996 issue is "Low-Key Summer Learning." This issue focuses on summer fun, outdoor motor skill development, picnicking, exploring summer weather, and summer carnivals. The theme of the September/October 1996 issue is "The Times of Your Day." It explores time issues such as smooth arrivals and departures, snacktime, and naptime. The theme of the November/December 1996 issue is "Peace and Goodwill." This issue focuses on working together, creating peaceful classrooms, mediation, helping in the community, and teaching caring and sharing. (SD)

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Vol. 17 No. 1 *For People Who Care for Young Children* January/February 1996

ED 405 976

THEME: Children's Literature

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Use the Library as a Resource
- Choose the Best Read-Aloud Books
- Create Storytime Props
- 20 Creative Ways to Tell Stories
- Use Books as Springboards to Learning Concepts
- Join Stories with Sounds and Music
- Help Children Create Their Own Stories and Books
- Books for Toddlers
- And Lots More!

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FIRST TEACHER Publisher and Editor-in-Chief ..... Lisa Lyons Durkin

Art Director ..... Debby Dixler
Contributing Designers ..... Nina and John Woldin
Logo Design ..... Gene Krackehl
Contributing Photographer ..... Peter Lewin
Production ..... Nina Woldin and Debby Dixler
Editorial Assistant ..... Christine Manavian
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

by Lisa Lyons Durkin

There is no question that reading to young children is very important for their development and later success in school and life. However there is so much more to sharing children's literature than just reading books aloud. The process begins with choosing the right stories for the right children at the right time. It can be a never-ending process as children who delight in one story want to hear it over and over, find more books by the same author or on the same subject, and even try to create their own stories using the one that was read as a model.

Choosing the right book is the theme of many of the articles in this issue of *First Teacher*— from creative ways to use the public library to creating a lending library in your own classroom. There are suggestions for selecting read-aloud picture books and wordless books by experts Paula Sitarz and Susan Mills. And Sherry Burrell shows you how to use specific titles to spark the imaginations of your children.

Tania Cowling's article on "Storytime Props" shows you how to enhance and extend favorite stories with story cubes, puzzles, mobiles, and puppets. In "The Storybox," you will learn how storytellers from many cultures use objects from a box or bag to embellish their tales. You may want to create your own classroom storybox for preschool storytellers to use. In "20 Ways to Tell and Create Stories," you are bound to find new ways to both tell familiar stories and make up new ones at storytime.

The centerfold in this issue challenges you to use books as springboards to activities in all areas of your curriculum. Karen Stephens has ideas for what to do when you read books on colors, food, transportation, feelings, ecology, and other countries. Hopefully her specific suggestions will inspire you to plan mini-units around children's favorite storytime books.

Children's literature should inspire children to create their own literary works. You'll discover lots of ways to help children make up stories in this issue—from class stories which start with a chart to individual tales based on magazine cutouts. Help children create puppets to help them tell their tales. Or, read books of childhood memories to inspire children to record special times in their lives.

Whatever you do, read, read, read! Show children that books will take them on amazing adventures—adventures that lead to a lifetime of learning and pleasure.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

In addition to *First Teacher*, **Beth Ann Bispham** has illustrated for many children's magazines including The Children's Television Workshop *Kid City* and *Highlights for Children*. She has recently completed a series of compact disk covers for children's songs for Time/Life Essex Records. She lives with her husband, teenage stepdaughter, and two-year-old daughter in Ridgewood, New Jersey.

Janet McDonnell is a freelance illustrator and writer living in Arlington Heights, Illinois. The mother of a one-year-old son, Janet draws while he naps. In addition to illustrating magazine articles, puzzles, and game boards, she has illustrated several books including *Turtle's Adventures in Alphabet Town* and *Look What God Made*. She has also written over 30 books for ages ranging from pre-schoolers to high-schoolers. Among those titles are: *Fall: A Tale of What's to Come* and *America in the Twentieth Century: The Twenties*.

PHOTO CREDITS

Peter Lewin: cover, 11, 12, 16, 17, 26, 33

ART CREDITS

Beth Ann Bispham: pages 18, 25
Debby Dixler: pages 10, 13, 19, 20, 21, 27, 30, 35
Janet McDonnell: page 28
Catherine Minor: pages 6, 7, 24, 34
Nina Woldin: pages 5, 14, 15, 22, 23

HELPFUL HINTS

A BOOK A DAY...

by Gail P. Jones

Look to family, friends, colleagues, the children you teach and their families, and, of course, the library for a never-ending source of good stories. Invite storytellers into the classroom, check out garage sales and have a "give the class a book day."

Change the books in your reading center for children's use on a regular basis. Incorporate books relating to your unit theme or the season. If you have a class library, you may wish to use strips of different colored tape on the binding to organize the books according to season or theme.

At the beginning of each unit, let children create class books for the reading center. Use as many different kinds as you can for both the reading and language arts centers. Challenge children to "cook up a story" or "paint a story"!

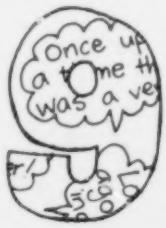
Show children how important the written word is by writing down what they say and reading it back to them... Use every opportunity to make them feel special and love books!

Make the reading center enticing by coordinating it with your unit theme. For example, if your unit is dinoaurs, the reading center can be a "Reading Cave" with a sign that says, **"Be a Readasaurus!"** Be sure to have plenty of stuffed dinosaurs or "friends" for children to read to while there!

During transitions, develop reading readiness skillls by using games that ask for rhyming words, opposites, and beginning sounds. For example,*"Raise your hand if you know a word that rhymes with "tree." "Billy has his hand raised." "Bee." "Right. 'Bee' rhymes with 'tree.' You may line up to go outside, Billy. Thank you."*

When telling magnetic or flannelboard stories, always put the pictures on the board from left to right and top to bottom as in reading. Let children use the pieces to a story in the language arts center for sequencing, retelling the story, and in creating new versions.

For independent listening, tape stories yourself ringing a bell to "turn the page." Store the tape in a zip-locking bag and let children use earphones and a tape recorder along with the book.



Praise all reading efforts and use a variety of methods to motivate children to love to read. Use "Homework" journals for dictating stories to their parents to write down and bring back to class to share with their friends. For motivational reading materials call Upstart 1-800-448-4887 to order a free catalogue.

TODDLER TIME

MY FIRST BOOKS

by Jeannine Perez

Anything that catches a toddler's interest instantly becomes "mine" to him. Although we usually try to discourage such possesive feelings about other things, books should always become "mine" to everyone who loves them.

The books in your center probably take many forms, from the ones you share at circle time to the stapled together ideas dictated to you by children. A variety of pictures and ideas help children make connections between the thoughts and ideas of others and their own world. Create an inviting book corner with low shelving, restful colors in the environment and bright colors in books, green plants, and soft cushions. Try to include examples of the many kinds of available books to interest toddlers.

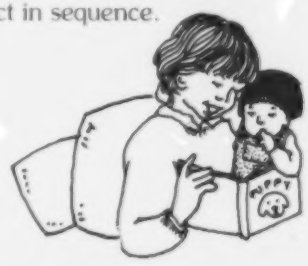
READ ALOUD BOOKS

At circletime we read a variety of books. Many of them echo the theme of our current unit. For example, if we are collecting rocks, I read *Everybody Needs a Rock* by Byrd Baylor (Scribners), and we may look at pictures of rocks in encyclopedias, magazines, or other non-fiction (without reading the more technical language) books. Some books are familiar ones that are reread often. We call them our old friends. Other books may be last minute choices that suit the situation. If a stormy day makes children feel fearful, we read *Peter Spier's Rain* by Peter Spier (Doubleday). If the day is heavy and full of stress, I pull out nonsensical books that help us all laugh away the grouchies. Sometimes I read a book that has language beyond a toddler's level, if the pictures are outstanding and the language lyrical. It is part of the "envelope of language" that helps each child learn to love words. *Train Song* by Diane Siebert (Thomas Crowell), fits this description. It contains some hard words and a wonderful rhythm.

READ-WITH-ME BOOKS

Books or stories with repetitious lines or very familiar plots encourage children's enthusiastic participation. Old favorites like "The Gingerbread Man" and "The Three Bears" are naturals for telling (and acting out) together. *Planting a Rainbow* by Lois Ehlert (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich) is another favorite. Children chime in to help name colors and flower names. Other examples are...

- *Play Rhymes*, *Finger Rhymes*, and *Hand Rhymes*, three books written by Marc Brown (E.P. Dutton). The humorous illustrations appeal to children, and small inset pictures suggest actions that allow children to participate.
- *Peanut Butter and Jelly* by Nadine Westcott (Houghton Mifflin). This is a big book with lots of repetition that is fun to act in sequence.



READ-IT-MYSELF PICTURE BOOKS

Wordless books are wonderful incentives for vocabulary development. Tell children that they can read these books to themselves during quiet choice times or share them with another child, pet, stuffed animal, or a teacher. Telling about pictures is a valuable experience. You may be surprised how the plot changes as different children tell it.

- *Rosie's Walk* (in either regular sized or big books) by Pat Hutchins (Scholastic) has no words. Let your children describe the pictures and tell you the story.
- In *Is It Red? Is It Yellow? Is It Blue?* by Tana Hoban

(Greenwillow), ideas are illustrated with clear and colorful photographs. My children pretend to be teachers with this book.

MEMORY BOOKS AND SCRAPBOOKS

At the beginning of each year, I share old scrapbooks and photo albums with my new class so that they can get a feeling of our class and anticipate some of our coming experiences. The books are durable enough that children can take them down with permission (I don't use large-sized albums) and can spend as much time with them as they like. We also start our own book of the upcoming year at the center, and I ask children to help me select, label, and mount snapshots of our cooking experiences, our wonderful garden, children napping, outdoor play, and parents as they come in to get their children. It provides a wonderful sense of sequential experiences and continuity for everyone and also shows us that our class is truly unique.

BOARD AND CLOTH BOOKS

We have a few very durable books made of cardboard or cloth. Some of them provide practice lessons in zipping, snapping, tying, etc. These books were made together by parents, teachers, and children during a potluck/workshop. I provided a sewing machine, materials, and some ideas; the parents each brought more ideas and some good food to share; and children brought still more ideas, boundless enthusiasm, and huge appetites. We made some books with white interfacing pages for a working book. Still other books had pockets containing fingerpuppets and the beginnings of a story. We even stitched together zip-locking bags with pictures inserted in each bag. Our books were a source of pride to all who participated and a legacy to pass on to future classes.

BOOKS WE WRITE OURSELVES

I fastened together booklets with 8-10 pages, using wallpaper samples as covers, and holding them together with bright yarn. Then we all worked together to look through old magazines for specific pictures. *"Look for something soft for this page. Good! Clouds are soft, and so are babies."* *"Look for something blue."* *"Can you find something funny?"* You can use concrete categories like shapes, colors, and numbers for these books or more abstract ideas—something scary, something warm, something beautiful.

We also make small "pocket" books. Stapled pages ready for dictated stories, that are small enough to fit into a pocket and carried about with pride.

STORYTELLING

I love to tell stories to all ages! Over the years I've collected stories that I know are no-fail, and I may change them to relate to different groups. Storytelling allows you to maintain eye contact with listeners and really ham it up. Toddlers make a wonderful audience. Some of my most successful stories were simply descriptions of something that happened to me on the way to school (embellished and acted out).

The greatest comment I heard from one of my little ones about the value of books was an admonition to another child who had carelessly dropped a book on the floor. Kim picked it up and closed it gently. *"Don't you know that books are our friends?"* Here's to our toddlers! May they all become lifelong readers.

L-I-B-R-A-R-Y BOOKS

by Barbara F. Backer

Books! Books! Books! And all of them for free! The public library has to be the best bargain in town. Shelves and shelves full of facts and fun, stories, and information to compliment every unit of study. This introductory tour of the **L-I-B-R-A-R-Y** shows what's available.

L

Learning about others: Introduce other cultures and lifestyles through books. Remember that farm life is "how others live" if you reside in the city and a middle class family with two parents is different from what many children experience. A story about circus performers introduces still another lifestyle.

- *Chicken Sunday* by Patricia Polacco (Philomel)
- *The Story About Ping* by Marjorie Flack (Viking)
- *The Little Painter of Sabana Grande* by Patricia Maloney Markun (Bradbury)
- *Cannonball Simp* by John Burningham (Bobbs-Merrill)
- *Hi, Cat!* by Ezra Jack Keats (Alladin)
- *Jamal's Busy Day* by Wade Hudson (Just Us Books)

I

Imagination: Children love to read, write, and act out stories about imaginary creatures. What sorts of stories are inspired by books like these?

- *Tuesday* by David Weisner (Clarion)
- *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak (Harper & Row)
- *There's a Nightmare in My Closet* by Mercer Mayer (Dial Press)
- *The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher* by Molly Bang (Four Winds Press)

B

Behavior: Young children often feel their behavior doesn't measure up. They sympathize with characters who act just like them, who are afraid of losing their mothers, who enjoy visits with grandparents, who make messes, and who long for a best friend.

- *Are You My Mother?* by P. D. Eastman (Random House)
- *Little Bear's Visit* by Else Holmelund Minarik (Harper & Row)
- *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter (Warne)
- *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Numeroff (Harper & Row)
- *Corduroy* by Don Freeman (Viking)

R

Research: Whatever topics you are studying, you'll find factual information for children and yourself in non-fiction books. The librarian will be happy to guide you to the right shelves. Choose several books on the topic so children learn that there are many approaches to a subject. Place the books in your classroom library for children to use.

- *Diggers and Dump Trucks* by Angela Royston (Alladin) shows pictures of huge machines.
- *Bikes* by Graham Thompson (Gareth Stevens, Inc.) introduces unicycles, racing bikes, motorcycles and more.
- Bright, clear illustrations and an inviting size attract children to *Flowers* by Gallimard Jeunesse, Calude Delafosse, and René Mettler (Cartwheel).
- Remember to include information about real bears when you introduce your teddy bear unit! Try *Bears* by Kate Petty (Gloucester Press).
- Children are fascinated by the tale of Red Riding Hood. Learn about real wolves with *Wolves* by Gail Gibbons (Holiday House).

A

Art: Some of the world's best artists illustrate books for kids, so looking at picture books is like a stroll through an art gallery. Choose books with a variety of artistic styles to help children develop an appreciation of beauty.

- *King Bidgood's in the Bathtub* by Audrey Wood (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich)
- *Red Fox* by Karen Wallace (Candlewick)
- any book by Ezra Jack Keats
- *The Red Thread* by Tord Nygren (R&S Books)
- *Snow on Snow on Snow* by Cheryl Chapman (Dial)
- Include books with outstanding photographic illustrations like *Big Cats* by Seymour Simon (HarperCollins)

To bring attention to different artistic styles, select several tellings of the same story, each with a different illustrator.

- *The Three Bears* by Paul Galdone (Houghton Mifflin/Clarion Books)
- *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* by Lorinda Bryan Cauley (G.P. Putnam's Sons)

R

Reading Success: Books that repeat a theme and are predictable provide children with the feeling that they can "read" on their own. After hearing you read the story a time or two, children pick up the book and experience the pleasure of reading success.

- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin (Holt)
- *Good Night, Owl* by Pat Hutchins (Macmillan)
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (Collins)
- *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown (Harper & Row)

Y

Yesterday: Introduce children to "history" by reading books that show the way things were in the past. Remember that for the preschool child, ten years ago was a long, long time.

- *Make Way for Ducklings* by Robert McCloskey (Viking)
- *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel* by Virginia Lee Burton (Houghton Mifflin)
- *The General Store* by Rachel Field (Little, Brown)

Get to know your librarians. They are dedicated to bringing readers and books together, and they'll be happy to help you find the books you need at the **LIBRARY**.

A LENDING LIBRARY IN YOUR CLASS

by Susan Entz

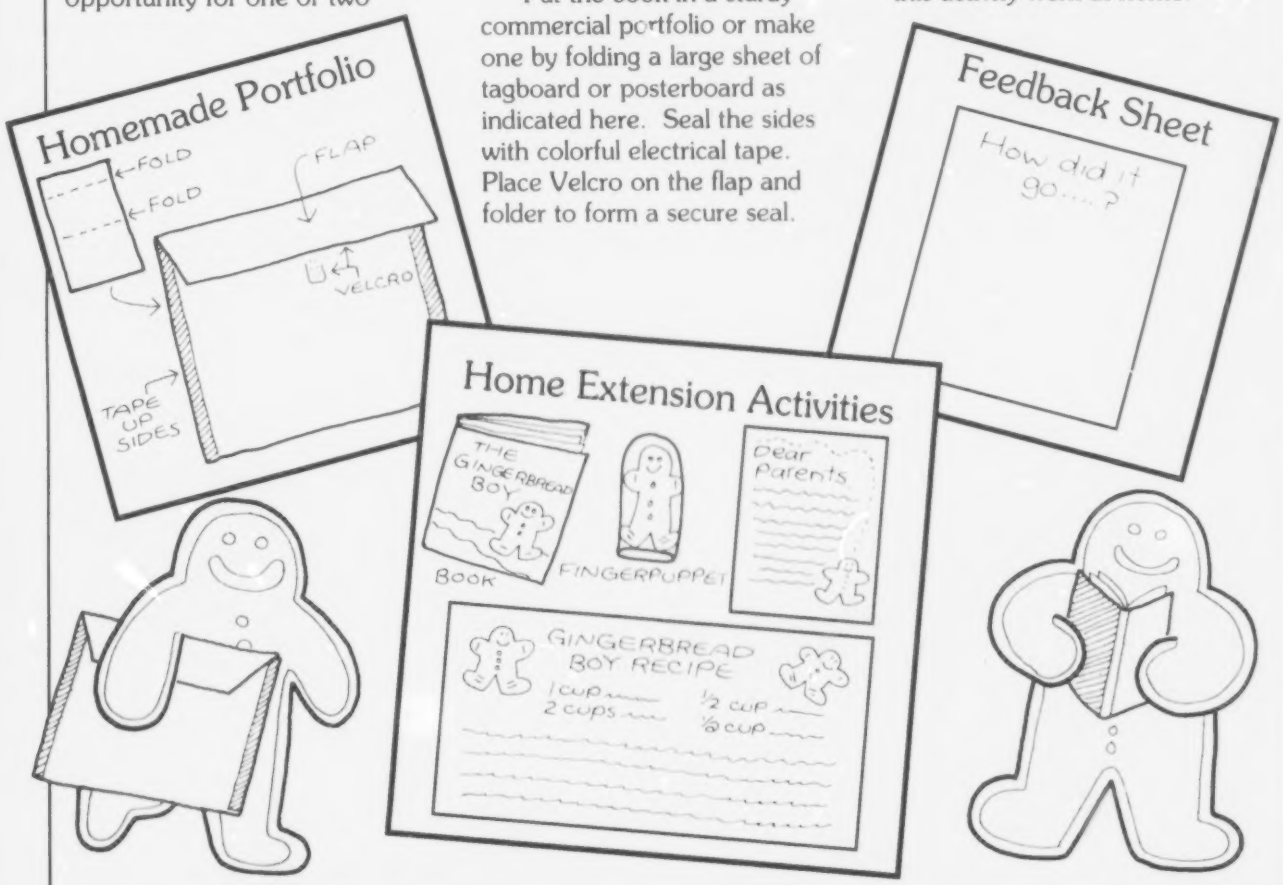
Encourage parental involvement by enlisting the help of families in fostering their child's interest in reading. Buy a duplicate set of favorite classroom books that can be checked out by children for home use and provide some simple at-home activities that relate to these stories.

Make a big deal out of the opportunity for one or two children to be allowed to select a book to take home that night. Emphasize the importance of taking good care of the book. During group time have the "book person" make his selection as the class watches. Comment on the selection, talking about how much classmates enjoyed that particular book when they checked it out.

Put the book in a sturdy commercial portfolio or make one by folding a large sheet of tagboard or posterboard as indicated here. Seal the sides with colorful electrical tape. Place Velcro on the flap and folder to form a secure seal. Then label the folder decoratively with identifying information so it can be returned to your school if lost.

Add a sheet describing a set of simple home extension activities. Include any manipulatives or activities that go along with that story.

Put in a feedback sheet so parents can let you know how this activity went at home.



TELL ME A STORY

by Susan G. Mills

Wordless picture books are a delightful way to explore literature with children. It gives them an opportunity to be the "author" using their imaginations to interpret events. You can use wordless picture books in your classroom in many ways.

All of the following activities focus around a single book. The activities help young children with many of the skills that will prepare them for success in Kindergarten. They learn that stories that are told can be written down and read by others. They gain experience observing and describing events. Language skills are strengthened as they share their thoughts and ideas with peers. In listening to other children's versions of the story, they are focusing on other people's ideas and perceptions.

The first step is to choose a book that you want to use. This activity may take several sessions depending on the length of the book and the attention span of your group. Or you can do one picture a day and spread the activity out.

Look through the book as a group, examining each picture carefully. Ask questions to make children notice what's happening in the picture. Examine each picture and describe what you see. You'll be amazed at the details children will notice. Ask who, what, when, where, and why questions.

As a group, you can tell a story to go with the pictures. Write down the text as it is dictated by members of the group. This group story can become part of your class library.

You can record the children's interpretations of the book by setting up a tape recorder and having individual children tell their own story about the pictures. When all the stories have been recorded, the class can have a storytelling time.

You can write these stories into blank paper books and each child can illustrate his own version of the story. Children who are beginning to write can put in their own text. These inventive spellings are an important step in the reading readiness process. The child should be able to "read" the story.

Other activities might include acting out a favorite version of the story or inviting parents or another class to hear some of the variations of the book. As the class gets accustomed to wordless picture books, you may find this to be an ongoing activity. Start a Book-of-the-Month club in your preschool classroom! Let children help you make a bulletin board for it.

Here is a list of some of the wordless picture books that are available today.

- *Winter* by Ann Blades (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard)
- *Three Topsy Turvy Tales* by Anne Broullard (Thomasson)
- *The Patchwork Farmer* by Craig Brown (Greenwillow)
- *In My Garden* by Ermanno Cristini and Luigi Puricelli (Picture Book)
- *I Can't Sleep* by Philippe Dupasquier (Orchard)
- *Oink, Oink* by Arthur Geisert (Houghton Mifflin)
- *Paddy Under Water* by John S. Goodall (Macmillan)
- *Little Red Riding Hood* by John S. Goodall (Macmillan)
- *Amanda and the Mysterious Carpet* by Fernando Krahn (Houghton Mifflin)
- *Harry and the Singing Fish* by Peter Lubach (Hyperion)
- *New Baby* by Emily Arnold McCully (Harper and Row)
- *Will's Mammoth* by Rafe Martin (Putnam)
- *Junglewalk* by Nancy Tafuri (Greenwillow)
- *Deep In the Forest* by Brinton Turkle (Dutton)
- *Free Fall* by David Weisner (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard)
- *Up a Tree* by Ed Young (Harper & Row)

READ-ALOUD PICTURE BOOKS

by Paula Sitarz

When you read aloud to children, you want to bring children's literature of artistic and literary merit to youngsters and you want children to view books and reading as pleasurable experiences. Here are some helpful suggestions for selecting picture books to share with your young children.

Look for picture books with **a straightforward story line** that can be absorbed in one listening. A good read aloud has pleasing language and is satisfying in some way. The images created are precise, not vague. Read *Good-Night, Owl!* by Pat Hutchins (Greenwillow). Who can resist the bees buzz, the crunch of the squirrels cracking nuts or the "*caw, caw*" of the crows?

The **illustrations** are a prime consideration. Can they be seen and appreciated by a group? Are the illustrations distinct and uncluttered? Do they enhance the text or distract from it? Are the illustrations appropriately placed? It's confusing and frustrating to children if you're talking about a boy who discovers a magic box, and they don't see the accompanying visual until you turn the page. For fine illustrations, look at picture books such as those by Donald Crews, Jim Arnosky, Lois Ehlert, and Holly Keller.

Several types of books work well with young children. *Mr. Grumpy's Outing* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston) by John Burningham is an example of a **cumulative story**. Each action builds on the one before to an inevitable climax. Mr. Grumpy invites numerous animals and two children for a ride in his boat. He tells each character to behave in a certain way. They don't and the boat tips over. They all swim to shore and have tea together. The book also has distinctive characters, swift plotting, and a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Other cumulative stories that are appealing include: *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins (Greenwillow), *The Napping House* by Audrey Wood (Harcourt Brace), and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (Philomel). Many folktales work well with children because they are meant to be read aloud and because they have repetition of action and language that children love. Select a version of "The Three Billy Goats Gruff" by P. C. Asbjornsen (there are several). In this tale the three billy goats must cross a bridge beneath which lives a mean troll. Each goat "trip traps" over the bridge, and each is threatened by the troll. The setting, characters, and conflict are established quickly, and once the climax arrives, the ending comes swiftly. Other folktales appropriate to share with young children are "The Gingerbread Boy," "The Three Bears," and

TORN PAPER PICTURES

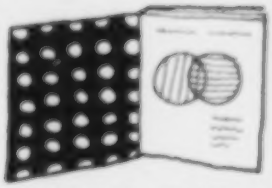
YOU'LL NEED:

glue

pieces of colored tissue paper

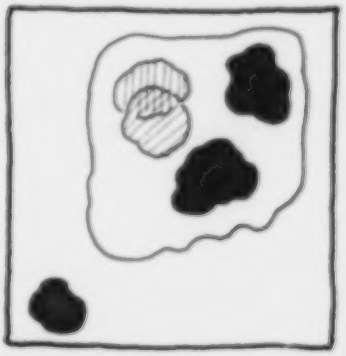
pieces of white paper

pen or typewriter


LITTLE BLUE AND LITTLE YELLOW by Leo Lionni

WHAT TO DO:

1. Adult reads LITTLE BLUE AND LITTLE YELLOW aloud to children.
2. Go back and discuss how the author used torn paper to illustrate it.
3. Tear pieces of tissue paper and glue on paper to make a picture.
4. Each child dictates his own story about his picture.
5. Adult types or writes the story and mounts it on the picture.



"The Little Red Hen." There are many retellings and illustrated versions of these tales.

Many picture books evoke **a special mood**. In *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats (Viking) children can join Peter on his adventures in the city on a snowy day. The words are carefully chosen; the colors are bold and vibrant. The mood is one of joy with nature. Among the many fine picture books that evoke a special mood are: *Otters Under Water* by Jim Arnosky (G. P. Putnam's Sons), *Country Crossing* by Jim Aylesworth (Atheneum), and *Listen to the Rain* by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault (Henry Holt).

Children also like stories that have a character with whom they can identify, a character who is in a situation or who exhibits an emotion with which they can identify. In *Geraldine's Blanket* by Holly Keller (Greenwillow), young Geraldine wants to keep her favorite blanket while her parents insist she get rid of it. Kevin Henkes is one of many other excellent authors who write stories with appealing characters. Try *Chrysanthemum* and *Jessica* (Greenwillow).

When you read aloud, you are probably sharing stories with children who have a variety of interests, tastes, and ranges of experience; so provide stores with various themes or treatments of a single theme and stories with varying plots, characters, settings, tempos, and artistic qualities. Use books that will stretch the imagination like *Martin's Hats* by Joan W. Blos (Morrow). Use books that make children curious, satisfy their curiosity, and tell them something about the world in a familiar or new way like *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox (Kane/Miller) and *Very Last First Time* by Jan Andrews (Atheneum). Make youngsters laugh with books like *Arthur's Baby* by Marc Brown (Little, Brown), The *Five-Dog Night* by Eileen Chistelow (Clarion Books), and *That Terrible Baby* by Jennifer Armstrong (Tambourine).

Ultimately the most important consideration in choosing stories to read aloud is to select stories that you like and that interest you. You can't generate enthusiasm for something you dislike.

I CAN READ

by Sandra Malcolm

The wordless picture book provides a rich resource for encouraging the creation of literature with young children. The absence of words allows them the freedom to tell the story as they see it. There is much opportunity for reading success as children concentrate on developing the story rather than worrying about word recognition and pronunciation. Young children are learning reading progression from left to right; analysis skills as they look at the pictures and the joy of being able to "read" a book all by themselves. The wordless picture books chosen for this month's Book Corner will stretch your children's imaginations and encourage them to create their own books without fear of failure.

THE PATCHWORK FARMER

by Craig Brown (Greenwillow) is about a farmer who tears his overalls when he goes out to work in his fields. He keeps adding patches until one day he goes to put on his overalls and they are all patchwork.

BEFORE READING, bring samples of patchwork (quilts, lap robes, clothing, placemats, etc.). Discuss what the word *patchwork* means. Tell children that the title of our story is *The Patchwork Farmer*. Look at the front and back book cover. What can you tell about the story from the title and the pictures?

AFTER READING, point out that the story didn't have any words. Ask children how they knew what was happening. Ask, *"Does the story have to be the same all the time? Why?" "Can we change it next time? How?" "If the story had words, what do you think the farmer would say?" "Who would he talk to?"*

ACTIVITIES

- Retell the story having a different child "read" the picture on each page. Encourage children to add dialogue to make the pictures come alive.
- Provide a variety of scraps of fabric, large-eyed needles and thread or yarn for children to create patchwork samplers. They could make something patchwork for the dress-up clothes.
- Encourage patchwork art by providing wallpaper sample books.

FIRST SNOW

by Emily Arnold McCully (Harper & Row) is the story of a family of mice who spend a wonderful day playing in the snow.

BEFORE READING, ask children how they feel when they see the very first snow of the winter. What kinds of things do they like to do in the snow? (Write responses on chart paper.)

AFTER READING, ask, *"Was our story true or make-believe? How did you know?" "What were the characters in the story?"* Ask children to recall some of the things the mice did in the snow. Were they the same things children said they like to do? Look at your list. Were you able to "read" the book without words? How?

ACTIVITIES

- Weather permitting, plan a day outside in the snow. Do the various activities show in the story as well as those enjoyed by the students.
- Make the book available for small groups of children to re-read.
- Have children write or dictate their own words for the story. Discuss dialogue and how it makes a story come alive.
- As a class, make a wordless big book using the childrens' drawings or paintings.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SHAPES, SHAPES, SHAPES

by Tana Hoban (Greenwillow) uses creative photography to illustrate everyday exposure to geometric shapes. Children will gain a new awareness of shapes in everyday life.

BEFORE READING, introduce shapes in an appropriate manner and at an appropriate time for your students. Sing a shape song, fingerplay, or share a shape poem. Look at objects in the room. Identify their shapes. Have flannel board or cardboard cut-outs of the shapes suggested on the first page of the book to look for. Say: "*Our story is titled Shapes, Shapes, Shapes by Tana Hoban. There are no words in the book. The pictures are photographs which we will be looking at to see all the shapes we can see. Are you ready to go on a Shape Hunt?*"

AFTER READING, ask children: "*Was this a story? Why or why not?*" Look at your flannelboard cut-outs. Did you find all of these shapes in the pictures? You may need to look more closely at the pictures in the book.

ACTIVITIES

- Choose a picture. Have children tell (or write) a story about what is happening in that picture. Repeat with other pictures.
- Go on a shape walk around your school or center. Take a camera (preferably a Polaroid) to photograph the shapes you see. Allow each child to photograph something.
- Use the photographs taken on the shape walk to create a class shape book. Mount each picture on a sheet of paper. Either leave the book wordless or have each child write a story about her picture.
- Encourage children to write and illustrate a story about their favorite shape (My Circle Book). Place them all on a shelf as a "Shape Library" to be read and shared.
- Provide many types of art media (paint, clay, sand, various papers, yarn, etc.) so children can create and experience the shapes.

WINDOW

by Jeannie Baker (Greenwillow) shows how the world outside a young boy's window changes from year to year as he grows into adulthood.

BEFORE READING, show pictures of places or things that have changed over time. Discuss the differences in the pictures. Have children look out a window. Make a list of the things they saw. Did everyone see the same things? Would all the same ...ngs be there tomorrow?

AFTER READING, Ask: "*How did we know what was happening in the story without words?*" "*What happened each time the boy looked out the window?*" "*Will the story always be the same each time we read it? Why or why not?*"

ACTIVITIES

- Re-read the story allowing each child time to carefully look at the pictures. Discuss the changes from picture to picture.
- Roll out a long piece of newsprint. Section it off into windows. Glue a birthday card (the kind that has a message such as: Happy Birthday 4 Year Old) to the corner of each section. Have children draw scenes they think they might like to see looking out a window. Hang the mural in the room.
- As a class (or individuals) write words to the story. Encourage action words and dialogue.
- Help Sam write a diary of the things he saw happening outside his window.
- Use the story to introduce children to environmental changes brought about by the people. Discuss what happens when trees are cut to make room for houses, roads, and stores.

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PLAYING WITH IMAGES IN STORIES

by Sherry Burrell

What is easy to get, easy to store, doesn't take up much space, can be used in a moment's notice, and instantly creates wonderful images in the minds of children? A book!

A few titles that really do the trick include: *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* by Judy Barrett (Macmillan), *The King Who Rained* by Fred Gwynne (Windmill Books), and the *Amelia Bedelia* series by Peggy Parish (Harper & Row). The authors of these stories are playful and imaginative in their use of words and imagery, and children often laugh aloud because they understand the "joke" involved with the "play on words" being used in the stories.

CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS

Start with Judi Barrett's book because even very young children understand that meatballs and other foods don't really fall down from the sky. They will know right away that this is a pretend, "wacky" kind of a story. Let children imagine and tell what would happen if meatballs really fell down from the sky! Play with the name of the town by helping children compare the town of "Chewandswallow" with other names such as "Catchandcook."

As a follow-up activity, have children list all the different types of weather they can think of. Introduce them to stories that give them more "weather" words, and list or draw pictures of many different ideas. Help children think of *cloudy, rainy, snowy, windy, foggy, stormy, sunny, icy cold, steamy hot,* and *slushy*. Add conditions such as sleet, hail, thunder, lightening, hurricane, tornado, and heat wave. Next, invite children to brainstorm a long list of the weirdest foods (and drinks) they can think of, their favorite foods, or the foods they dislike most.

Now you have the makings for the creation of many stories told by your children themselves. Follow the format of the story, and let children combine a weather condition with a food or drink from the list. Some children may want to draw the pictures for their stories, others may re-tell the story into a tape recorder, or some may even want to "read" the story back to the class. The result will be some imaginative, wacky stories that combine unusual word images with a story line.

THE KING WHO RAINED

This story introduces children to "homophones," or words that sound exactly the same but are spelled differently and mean something totally different from one another. It also includes some words that

are spelled the same but have "multiple meanings." The illustrations are very large, clear, and bright, and are quite humorous once a child is helped to understand that the "wrong" meaning or spelling is being used!

Activities related to this story are sure vocabulary builders. Try doing lots of preliminary activities BEFORE reading this story to children. Choose some words that children might comprehend BOTH the meanings of, and inspire children to draw funny pictures mixing them up. The book uses "rained/reigned," "horse/hoarse," "deer/dear," "bear/bare," "prints/prince," "boar/bore," and "tails/tales." Have pictures or other books available to show the alternate meaning of each word.

Gwynne also uses "figures of speech" such as "a fork in the road," and "a coat of arms," representing them in the literal sense. Show children what these figures of speech really mean, then show them the silly way they are depicted in the story. It will be easy to tell whether or not the children understand the concepts you are teaching. If they giggle and laugh when you finally read *"The King Who Rained"*—they understand!!!

THE AMELIA BEDELIA SERIES

Once children seem to grasp the concept that words that sound the same can have different meanings, it can be great fun to imagine what a problem it would be if someone kept getting all the word meanings mixed up. The *Amelia Bedelia* series of stories by author Peggy Parish really "hits the nail on the head." (Ouch!) These longer story books put Amelia in lots of different environments and situations. The story is always based on what happens when the "maid," Amelia Bedelia misinterprets what is being said to her.

Once children begin to understand how the "Amelia Bedelia" stories work, they easily become involved in predicting what will go wrong as each direction is given to the main character. Don't be surprised if pretty soon, the children in your class start challenging you to be more precise with YOUR words! "Salute the flag" might simply be a quick army type "salute," *"wipe your feet"* might result in the children stooping over to wipe their feet with their hands, and *"pick up the toys"* might turn into a bunch of giggling children trying to hold as many toys as they can in their arms at once, asking, *"When can we put them down?"*

But don't worry! You can play this game too! When a child comes up to you and says *"Please put my coat on,"* simply take her coat, and try to put it on yourself. Tell her, *"I'm sorry, but it doesn't fit me,"* and watch the giggles erupt.

STORYTIME PROPS

by Tania Cowling

Children should be introduced to a variety of books. Story time is a special time for bonding between children and an adult, a time to discover new ideas and explore new worlds. Good books extend a child's horizons, build good reading skills, and clarify concepts.

Below are a few ideas to make story props for enhancing the text of favorite stories.

STORY CUBE

Purchase a plastic photo cube. Fill each side with a pictorial event from a story. These could be cut from an inexpensive book or drawn by a teacher or child. Have children turn the cube from picture to picture in proper order, as they retell the story.

STORY PUZZLE

Photocopy a favorite scene from a storybook. A color copy would be nice if available. Cover the picture with clear plastic adhesive paper. Cut this into several zig-zag puzzle pieces. The number of pieces should be determined by the age and ability of the children.

STORY PLATES

Take a paper plate and divide it into eight sections. Draw a small picture from the story into each section. Attach a cardboard spinner to the center of the plate with a brass fastener. Spin and name the picture, discussing how it relates to the entire story.

TUBE CHARACTERS

Create stand-up story characters using toilet tissue tubes. Cut two 1-inch slits opposite each other on the top of the tube. Draw and color story characters on posterboard. Cut these out and place them in the slits on the tubes. Stand and move these tubes across the table while reenacting the stories.

STORY MOBILE

Make a simple mobile using a wire coat hanger. Tie on different lengths of yarn or ribbon attaching paper picture cutouts. Draw these characters or scenes yourself or cut them from old storybooks.

MAGNETIC CHARACTERS

Cut out story characters that you have drawn or ones from an old storybook. Glue these onto cardboard for strength. Attach small strips of self-stick magnetic tape to the back of these shapes. As you retell the story, affix these characters to a metal cookie sheet .

STORYBOARD

Staple flannel material to the back of a bookcase or moveable solid-backed furniture. Make story characters out of felt fabric that will adhere to the flannel. Collect your felt pieces in a box and return the furniture to its place after story hour is finished.

PUPPET STAGE

Use an empty facial tissue box as a puppet stage. Place the box on its side, the oval area as the stage. Cut the bottom out of the box for the child's hand. You can now decorate the child's fingers as puppets or make stick puppets using craft sticks that can be held by the child. Act out your favorite story!

Books Are Springboards

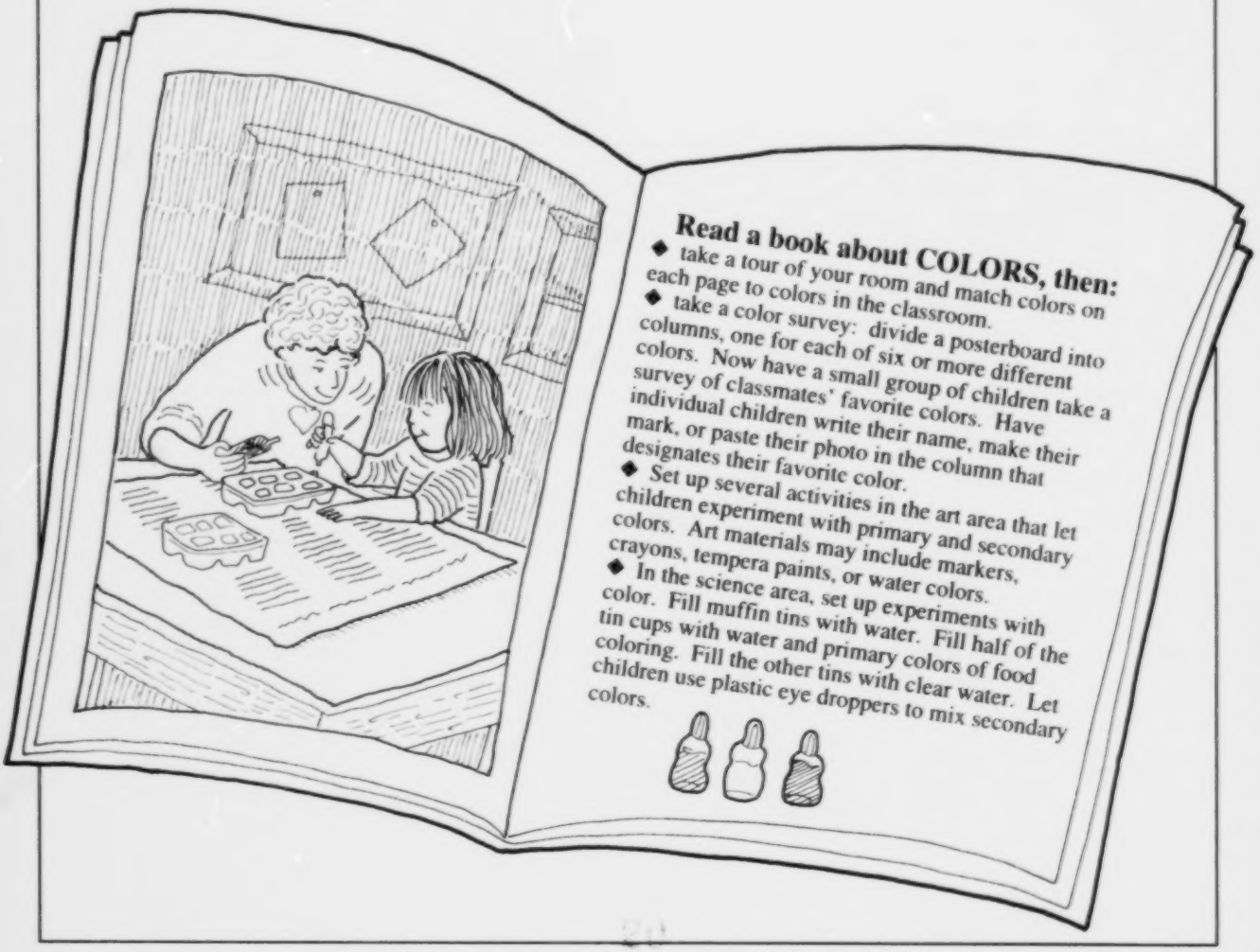
SPRING INTO HANDS-ON LEARINING WITH BOOKS

by Karen Stephens

Feeling short on ideas for classoom activities? Inspiration lies right within your reach! All you have to do is turn to your children's literature library!

Appreciating literature, and realizing how it can enrich our daily lives, is one of the best ways to motivate children to take an interest in written as well as spoken language. Integrating learning across curriculum areas is the best way for young children to learn. And it keeps the teachers' interest, too!

So, grab your favorite book, and start brainstorming. Hands-on learning activities can spring forth! Here are some ideas to get you started.



Read a book about COLORS, then:

- take a tour of your room and match colors on each page to colors in the classroom.
- take a color survey: divide a posterboard into columns, one for each of six or more different colors. Now have a small group of children take a survey of classmates' favorite colors. Have individual children write their name, make their mark, or paste their photo in the column that designates their favorite color.
- Set up several activities in the art area that let children experiment with primary and secondary colors. Art materials may include markers, crayons, tempera paints, or water colors.
- In the science area, set up experiments with color. Fill muffin tins with water. Fill half of the tin cups with water and primary colors of food coloring. Fill the other tins with clear water. Let children use plastic eye droppers to mix secondary colors.

Read a book about FEELINGS, then:

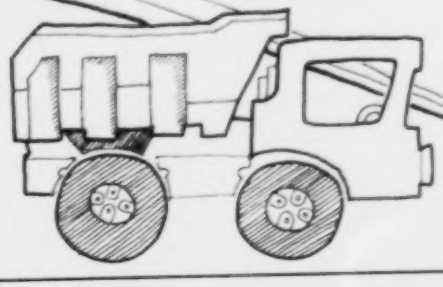
- ask children to dictate stories to you about specific feelings. Example: *"Let's write a story about a child getting lost in the mall. Let's write a story about a child winning a free trip to Disney World!"*
- collect or create a variety of "feeling" picture cards. Have children sort the cards into different emotion piles—scared, lonely, frightened, excited, happy.
- create a language chart. Start with the sentence: *It really makes me angry when* _____. Each child takes a turn to tell what makes them mad. Write down what each child says and write the name next to his comment. Make a separate chart for a variety of emotions. Place these language charts where they will catch parents' attention. They will love reading their children's comments!

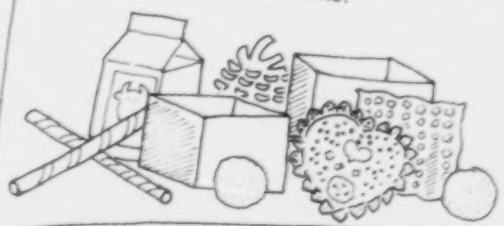
Read a book about TRANSPORTATION, then:

- add transportation vehicles to your block center.
- outside in your riding toy area, provide empty packing boxes and let children play UPS or Federal Express delivery persons with their wagons and big wheels.
- invite a trucker to bring his "big rig" to school for children to tour. Ask the milk carrier if children can tour his refrigerated truck.
- provide transportation pictures for children to sort into three piles: air transportation, land transportation, and water transportation.
- provide transportation dramatic play kits. Ideas include airline pilot, trucker, bus or subway driver, race car driver, railroad engineer.
- take a ride on a ferry boat or steamboat if you are lucky enough to live near one!

Read a book about ECOLOGY, then:

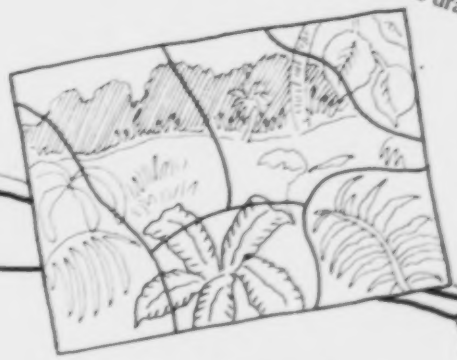
- take a litter walk!
- start a recycling center in your classroom.
- visit a local nature preserve.
- plant a butterfly garden.
- make a language chart on ways we can all conserve water, electricity, and so on.
- collect money from recycling and adopt a whale or gorilla!
- provide nature items for children to use to decorate the bulletin board.
- in the art center, create collages with recycled items from home.





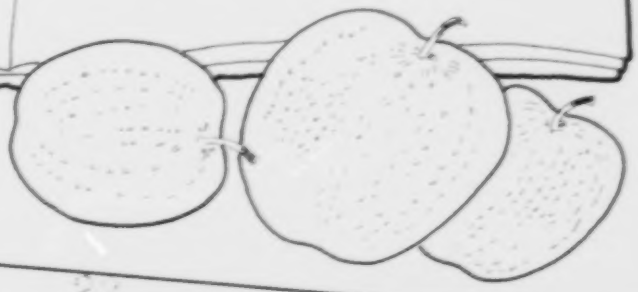
Read a book about ANOTHER COUNTRY, then:

- cook a favorite food from that country.
- play music, dance, and sing songs from the country.
- play children's games from the country.
- get travel posters advertising the country and turn them into puzzles.
- put up large mural paper on a wall and let children paint the landscape of the country.
- ask a special visitor to come in and share the country with children.
- collect dolls from the country and let children use them in the doll house or in the dramatic play center.
- place clothing from the country in the dramatic play center for dress-up.



Read a book about FOOD, then:

- plan a cooking project including food or meals introduced in the book.
- take a field trip to an ethnic restaurant, farmer's market, or grocery store.
- invite a special visitor into the classroom to demonstrate cooking.
- plant a small vegetable garden in the play yard or even on a window sill.
- let children make food collages by cutting out pictures from old seed catalogs, newspaper circulars, and magazines.
- prepare the same food in a variety of ways; for example: eggs scrambled, fried, hard boiled, etc.
- sort plastic foods into food groups.
- make food puzzles: Cut out the front of cardboard food containers, such as cereal boxes. Then cut them into 4-16 pieces so children can reassemble.
- make paper mache foods in the art center.
- create a restaurant, grocery store, or farmer's market in the dramatic play corner.
- in the science center, cut open a variety of foods to see how they look inside. Have a tasting party. For example, try all types of apples.
- inside a box or smooth-edged can, place a variety of plastic fruits and vegetables. One at a time, have children reach inside and describe what they are feeling. Can they guess the food? (A tougher game: have children describe what they are feeling so fellow classmates can guess what food it is they are touching.)



20 WAYS TO TELL AND CREATE STORIES

by Gail P. Jones

If you want to add spice to your life and storytime, why not try some of these ways to tell and create stories? Not only will you be tapping your own creative talents, but you'll also find these ideas give you great ways to create stories with children.

Action stories are favorites with young children and understandably so since they keep children moving. A classic example of an action story is "Let's Go on a Bear Hunt!" The same idea can be easily adapted to creating a story for winter using "trudging through the snow."

"Baggie" stories use copies of photos of the children's faces, zip-locking bags, paper to fit inside, and stick figures drawn to tell a story.. They can reinforce class rules or build self-esteem! For example, page one might show three children in your class hanging up their coats; page two might show two more putting on their own boots.

Chalkboard stories are stories using chalk and a blackboard with the movement of the chalk beginning from a dot and representing the movement of the characters in the story. The picture drawn with the chalk usually has a surprise ending! Children can have hours of fun creating them for each other! Try creating one that ends up with a heart for Valentine's Day!

Diorama stories can be easily made with a large tissue box cut in half on the long side diagonally. Decorate the inside as scenery and use cardboard stand-up characters. Children will love making favorite fairy tales into dioramas!

Flannelboard stories are made for use on a flannelboard with removable pieces. These can be used for sequencing and learning left-to-right progression also. The sticky side of Velcro works very well on the backs of the pieces. Be sure to use yarn, cotton, and other materials too.

Flashlight stories are especially fun for children to 'focus' on objects, shapes, or colors to create the story! By moving the flashlight in different ways, children might create a spatial concept story.

Flip chart stories usually show a sequence of events such as a flower growing taller on each page. Let children draw the pictures and assemble them into a surprise "Flip Story"!

Flap stories are always a favorite as we see in the popularity of "Spot" stories! Older children love using this method for creating rhymes and Valentine's Day is a great opportunity for this. An example might be: *"Roses are red, trees are green"* (child draws these on a piece of paper); next to or under the picture, put a flap over the picture of the phrase or word that rhymes. Ex: *"You're the best friend I've ever seen!"*

Ingredient stories may describe liquids mixed to create colors or a volcano or a cooking story that ends up with a surprise. Children might enjoy a story with a recipe for a heart-shaped cake or fudge candies!

Magnetic stories are made like flannelboard stories except that they use magnetic tape and a magnetic surface. Children love them and can use them afterwards for sequencing and creating new versions of favorite tales!

Mini-plays are easily made by using a scene of posterboard into which slits are cut for "tabbed" characters. Children can make both and are especially proud to see their creations used in a "play"!

Old-to-New storybook stories are a great way to recycle old books and create new stories with children! Use the pictures from discarded books to make flannelboard, magnetic, flip, or other type stories. Combining two unrelated fairy tale characters is especially fun and interesting!

Painting stories can be used to tell a story that may include color blends, shapes, spatial concepts, etc. As you tell the story, paint a picture on a large sheet.

Paper cutting stories are fun to watch and fun to do! A cute one for February is about a mouse nibbling (you cut with a pair of scissors on folded paper) that ends up as a fancy Valentine when unfolded!

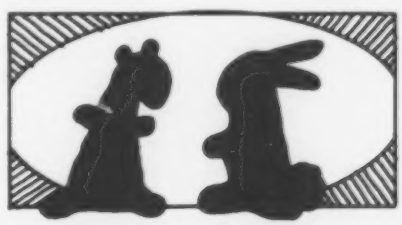
Paper folding stories can be created by folding paper as the story is told. Try creating one using a simple origami idea.

Puppet stories are an old-time favorite and may be combined with a flannelboard, magnetic, or other type story. If you have a class mascot, perhaps you could incorporate it into a story for more emphasis!

Puzzle stories can be told by the teacher or by all the group with each person contributing a piece. Children can make a story "picture." Glue it to cardboard, laminate, and cut into puzzle pieces for their own "puzzle stories."

Rebus stories are especially fun for those just-about-ready-to-read children in your class. By using pictures for key words along with the printed words, children can "read" the story with you! You can also use stickers for pictures when creating them with children!

Shadow stories are especially appropriate for February with Groundhog Day! Using a flashlight, small lamp, or slide projector, you can create shadow stories on paper or a sheet with stencils or objects. Children love doing this with themselves as the objects!



Story wheels Using a cardboard wheel with pictures in each section and a spinner, children can create their own stories. For example: all red things or all square things.

SOCIAL SKILLS START WITH A STORY

by Ellen Javernick

Young children need guidelines for behavior, but preschool teachers can't post lists of school rules on the wall. Our children can't read! We can't spend hours explaining expectations for countless classroom behaviors and routines. Our young charges won't stand (or sit) for it. Besides, we could never list all the "don'ts." Erma Bombeck once wrote that you could tell your child not to stuff socks down the toilet, but that didn't guarantee he wouldn't try flushing a shoe down instead.

Despite the challenge it presents, teaching children appropriate behavior is our responsibility. If we're proactive, we can eliminate the need to "scold," and ensure that our little ones will succeed in social situations.

"Socially challenged" children seem unaware of the consequences of their actions. They seem unable to transfer behaviors from one situation to another. If they're told not to take another child's puzzle, they don't generalize that to mean that they shouldn't take someone's play dough.

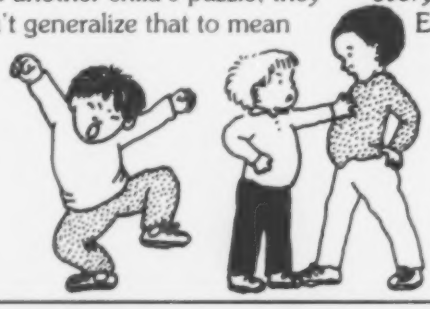
Children who are unsuccessful socially are egocentric. When I wrote *What If Everybody Did That* (Children's Press), I had a kindergartener who seemed to sense the effect of his actions. Once I had observed Austin during storytime in the library. He interrupted seven times while a single story was being read. No wonder other children found his behavior unbearable.

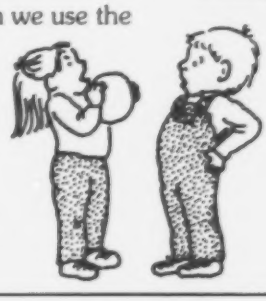
With Austin in mind, I wrote, *"during storytime I had something important to say. I just couldn't wait till the end of the story. The librarian put her finger to her lips and said, "What if everybody did that?"* The text is accompanied by Richard Hackney's delightful illustration of what we can imagine it would be like if everyone interrupted. The book describes the main character's other transgressions, after which come the refrain, *"What if everybody did that?"*

Each year when we use the book, I ask boys and girls to think about "bad" things they might do that would cause people to say, *"What if everybody did that?"* They come up with things like ripping up the books, throwing snacks on the floor, and running in the halls. They draw pictures of the disastrous results.

The final spread in the book shows what it's like when everybody does something nice. Children enjoy thinking of things like sending pictures to a sick friend, or stacking the blocks neatly that would cause someone to say, *"I'm glad everybody did that."* When we compile pages for our class books, we include some positive pictures as well as the negative ones.

I know that our children are internalizing the idea of thoughtfulness when they admonish disruptive behavior with the words, *"What if everybody did that?"* These words encourage children to be less egocentric and help them understand the consequences of their actions.





IS MOTHER GOOSE GOOD FOR KIDS?

by Susan Tersoff

Through the years, parents and teachers have traditionally recited Mother Goose rhymes or nursery rhymes to children. Some of these rhymes are suitable but others are quite inappropriate for young children. According to *The Annotated Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes Old and New*, arranged and explained by William S. Baring-Gould and Ceil Baring-Gould (Clarkson N. Potter, Inc.), Mother Goose rhymes originally had a variety of purposes: to teach letters and numbers; to mark historic events; and to entertain with riddles and tongue twisters, lullabies and prayers, and even love songs and drinking songs.

Some nursery rhymes which are still popular are fun to recite and seem harmless, even though the subject matter was originally for adults. For instance the counting rhyme, "Eeny, Meeny, Miney Mo" which children use to determine who will be "It," may have originally been used by the Druids (priests of ancient Britain, Ireland, and Gaul) to choose their human sacrifices.

Other nursery rhymes are more obviously inappropriate for young children. "Three Blind Mice" began as a round to be sung,and appeared for children over 200 years later, in 1842. One interpretation, though not convincing, has "the farmer's wife" represent Queen Mary I of England, owner of a large amount of land. She was a Roman Catholic. The "three blind mice" represent Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer, three Protestants she had burned at the stake for heresy. Whether or not one accepts this interpretation, the nursery rhyme is violent in and of itself, and would not be deemed acceptable for children by today's standards.

Similarly, it is surprising that "Jack Be Nimble" has endured. Children are constantly being warned about the danger of fire. The origin of this rhyme is an old English tradition of the lacemakers of Wendover in Buckinghamshire, on St. Catherine's Day, November 25. A lit candle in a candlestick was placed on the floor. It was believed that the person who jumped over it without extinguishing the flame would have good luck for a year.

"Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater" is inappropriate for Peter's bad treatment of his wife. This Mother Goose rhyme, like so many others, is unsuitable for children when taken literally, which is usually how young children take things.

"Rock-A-Bye Baby" is still popular today. Parents sing it to babies, and children sing it to dolls. However the last lines are frightening, and not child-oriented. A colleague, Mary S. revised it for her infant, changing the last two lines to *"And Daddy will catch you/Cradle and all."*

Many Mother Goose rhymes have lasted over the years because they are fine for children—rhythmic and fun to chant. But Chris S., a parent and elementary school counselor, cautions parents and teachers to listen to the words before passing these rhymes on to children. For children who are old enough, teachers may want to follow Mary's example and let students rewrite the nursery rhymes themselves. After all, it is not necessary to avoid Mother Goose altogether, but to pick and choose carefully, keeping your young children in mind.

PICK A PUPPET, WRITE A BOOK

by Barbara Fischer

Children love to play with the sound and feel of words. The joy and excitement of listening to stories is the foundation for future reading and writing skills.

SET THE STAGE

Make your program come alive by incorporating finger puppets. Toys, including puppets, are childhood favorites. Let these provide a bridge from play to books. Begin your program by reading poetry to children. *Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young* selected by Jack Prelutsky (Alfred A. Knopf) is an excellent first choice. Your children will respond to the humor and nonsense poems of this book. *You Read to Me, I'll Read to You* by John Ciardi (J.B. Lippincott) is another book of poems that children will enjoy hearing. Give children time to look at the pictures, savor word sounds, and find out a little about the author.

Introduce stories that have animals as main characters. Ask a few discussion starters such as: *"Can you think of another ending?" "What about a different beginning?"* See what you and children come up with.

Now take a look around your art center. Did the author or illustrator use some of the same materials that you have at school?

IT'S TIME TO BEGIN

Gather children in a circle and put on your special Story Hat. This hat will have a wide brim with objects such as stars, a sun, feathers, or animals hanging from it on strings. Ask children to choose an object, and you will tell its story. (Be sure to have a short story about each item on your hat.) The legend of this Story Hat comes from West Africa and states that when the storyteller wears this hat, the *"stories are in his head and the table of contents is on his* hat." This hat is worn by the storyteller when telling his tales. Each child can make her own story hat. Children can hang a picture or object representative of each story that they write. By the end of the unit, their story hats will be filled with stories.

▲ **The Story Hat** To make the story hat invert a paper bowl on a piece of construction paper. Measure a circle three inches from the edge of the bowl. Cut out the circle and cut out the center of this circle to form a brim for the hat. Staple this brim to the hat and decorate.

The bowl you choose should be big enough to fit the child's head.

◀ **A Puppet Story** Encourage children to dictate a story to you and to illustrate it. Make an interesting cover—ideas abound: marble paint, water color, fingerpaint, and so on.

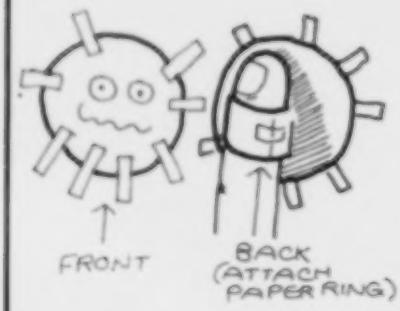
Make a special finger puppet representative of the main character. If the child's story is about a mouse, the mouse puppet sits on the child's finger and together they "read" the story. When the story is finished, the mouse goes to sleep in a special pocket or "mouse house" stapled to the bottom one third of the front cover of the book.

Have children pick a puppet and write a book. Your budding authors will not only have their very own book, but they will also have a special puppet friend.

This program can be integrated into your regular language arts time and/or art time. If you are using learning centers, all related activities may be accomplished at one center. Place books, paper, puppet materials and art supplies out for children to use.

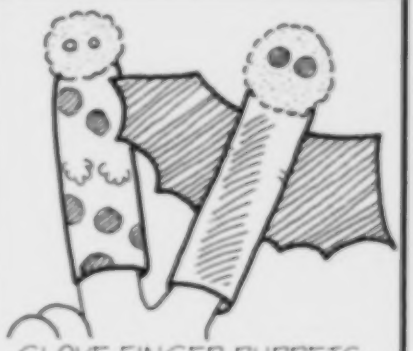
A story puppet can become a child's special friend—a friend that can share reading adventures. And don't forget your joy in reading too!

SOME PUPPETS TO MAKE



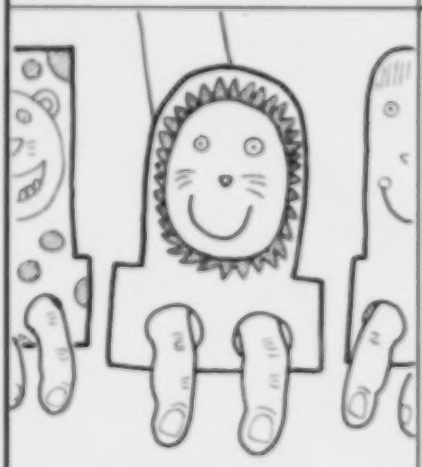
RING PUPPETS

Spiders and "creative creatures" work well with this type of puppet. Cut out a construction paper circle and decorate it to represent the animal or creature desired. Make the ring by rolling up a one-inch strip of paper and attaching it to the back of the puppet. Slip the ring on the child's finger. Add eight yarn legs for spiders or an interesting face for a creature.



GLOVE FINGER PUPPETS

Two pairs of cloth garden gloves can make 20 puppets. Cut off the individual fingers from the gloves to use as animal or creature bodies. Glue a pom-pom on top of the tip of the finger for the head. Add eyes and other features. Use markers or crayons to color the glove finger. To create bats or birds, glue construction paper wings across the top of the finger tube.

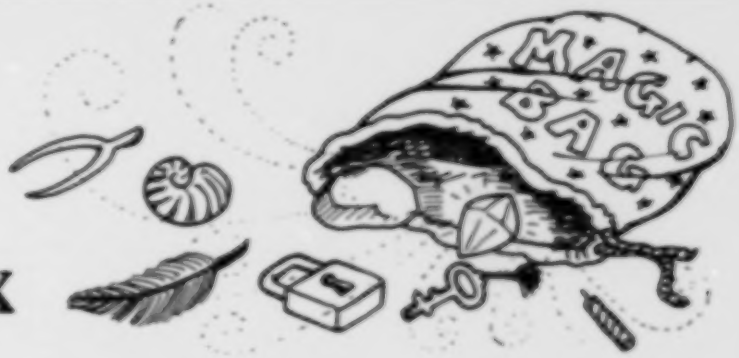


ANIMAL SHAPES

Cut an animal or creature shape about 5" long by 4" wide. Make the bottom third into a rectangular shape. Punch two holes, each with a diameter of 3/4" near the bottom for fingers to go through.

ACCORDION-FOLDED PUPPETS

These make delightful people or slinky snakes. Cut a strip of paper 12" long by 2" wide. Fold accordion style. Draw a face on the top square. Hold the puppet by the second fold which becomes the mouth. Decorate entire strip.



THE STORYBOX

by Leanne D. Grace

Itinerant storytellers of many lands and cultures use trinkets or unusual objects drawn from a bag or attached to a vine to weave tales according to Anne Pellowoski, in *The Story Vine* (Macmillan).

Using a similar idea, children can become story weavers. Before reading any story, place a few items that represent the main characters or ideas in the story in a box or bag. We created a storytelling community in our classroom by introducing *Spider and the Sky God* by Deborah Newton Chocolate (Troll) with a box containing a plastic spider, leopard, and snake, a bee puppet, web strands, kente cloth, yam, and a gourd. You can create suspense by throwing some tropical cloth over one shoulder and taking on the role of *griot* or African storyteller. Chant *"A Story, A Story! My box holds many stories, help me create one."* Items can be drawn out of the box to be labeled (by even the youngest listener). The teller can then question, *"How will our story begin? What do you think the spider (leopard, etc.) will do or say?"* Using the objects, children can predict what they think the story will be (tape record or write down their responses). Later or the next day, follow up by reading or telling the actual story. Allow children to compare and contrast "their" story with the "real" story.

Once the storybox idea has been created, other stories can be introduced in a similar manner. Our children created a very elaborate storybox. I spray painted a box gold and children glued on sparkles, sequins, and stars.

If not overused, the storybox becomes quite magical and exciting. It is also important to leave the story materials in the book area so children can revisit the story to retell and act out.

The Pellowoski book is a source of many easy-to-tell stories from around the world. The children in our class created sand stories from Australian iconographs (simple line and circle drawings). First, we told stories by drawing in sand on a shoebox lid; each child then traced stories, letters, pictures etc. in their own lids (pre "Etch-a-Sketch"). Later children preserved their stories by using glue to draw iconographs and sprinkled them with sand.

Story boxes or bags can also contain objects that all begin with the letter of the alphabet being introduced. Our "P" bag is pink and contains: a pair of pink pants with paint on them, pockets in the pants contain a plastic pig pin and little people... etc. A story can be woven as objects are drawn from the bag.

An assortment of unusual objects in a storybox/bag can be used to weave a story. We call this our "Magic Bag" because no two stories are ever the same. This bag contains such items as: a key, lock, feather, stone, bone, seashell, birthday candle.

Surrounding children with stories is a marvelous way to cultivate imagination, creativity, and language. Perhaps these first storytelling activities will help create children who will be lifelong readers.

MEMORIES

by Karel Kilimnik

Storytelling is an integral part of all cultures whether oral or written. Many authors of children's books draw upon their own memories and family stories for inspiration.

Memories also provide an opportunity for adults to share their own stories. Sample some of these memory stories and share your own!

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

Donald Crews draws upon his childhood summers spent in Florida with his grandparents and cousins. In *Bigmama's* (Greenwillow), we meet Crews' grandparents who live on a working farm complete with a sewing machine *"that you had to pedal like a bicycle."* It's a wonderful starter for children's stories of family gatherings.

Shortcut (Greenwillow) is based on a hair-raising incident one summer and reflects Donald Crews' lifelong love of trains.

David Birchman draws upon his childhood love of getting dirty to create *The Raggly Scraggly No-Soap No-Scrub Girl* (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard). The raggly, scraggly, no-soap, no-scrub girl bounces into the lives of a very orderly, very clean family at dinner time. Cramming food into her mouth at whirlwind speed, she astounds the family with her eating habits, wolfs down her food and provokes a round of dancing. This frolicking tale will delight young children as they watch her antics at the table and in trying to avoid taking a bath.

MEMORIES OF GRANDPARENTS

Stephanie longs for the colorful doll high up on the cabinet but it belongs to her Grandpa and he is unwilling to let her even touch it. One day when her grandparents are napping, she carefully takes the doll down and discovers more dolls nestled inside. *The Wooden Doll* by Susan Bonners (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard) provides an excellent opportunity for children to talk about their favorite toys. This sweet story is based on a doll the author's grandfather brought from Poland.

Patricia Polacco's books draw upon her life experiences and memories. A young girl overcomes her fear of thunderstorms as she helps her Grandma bake in *Thunder Cake* (Scholastic).

Thunder rumbles through the air sending a young girl into hiding under her bed. After coaxing her out from under the bed, Grandma proceeds to enlist her help in gathering together the farm-fresh ingredients for Thunder Cake. Thunderstorms are very scary, but in this story Grandma remains a calm anchor in the storm, continually reassuring her granddaughter. This book can be used to help children talk about their fears.

Fond memories of her grandfather's immigration stories formed the basis for Mary Watson's *The Butterfly Seeds* (Tambourine Books). Jake's grandfather gives him a handful of special flower seeds that attract butterflies as his family prepares to move overseas. Jake's family moves to two small rooms high up from the ground in a large city. Once there the resourceful boy figures out how to create a space to plant his precious butterfly flower seeds. Jake's story can serve as a springboard for collecting stories about people have moved from one area to another.

Tanya's Reunion by Valerie Flournoy (Dial Books for Young Children) is based on the author's memories of visiting a relative's farm. Tanya is thrilled to go early to the family reunion with her Grandma. The farm does not meet Tanya's expectations of what a farm house should look like. Everything is just a little bit off for Tanya, including her cousins. A long talk with her Grandma helps Tanya see the farm and her cousins in a very different way.

CREATING STORIES

by Karin-Leigh Spicer

Creating stories is a great way for children to explore their creativity. First, share with young learners a variety of picture books and have them tell you what they see taking place on each page. For example, show children any of the *Carl* books by Alexandra Day (Farrar Strauss Giroux). What is Carl the rottweiler doing? Why is he doing it? What is he thinking? Try to have children go beyond the obvious. Then have them look at the entire book. How does the story start? How does it end? Is the story funny or sad? Other picture books that offer rich illustrations and creative thinking are *The Further Adventures of the Little Mouse Trapped in a Book* by Monique (Green Tiger Press), and *Rain* or *Noah's Ark* both by Peter Spier (Zephyr Books).

Next, have young learners create their own stories. First, cut out pictures of animals, people, or objects from magazines. (Laminate or make them usable for a flannelboard if you wish.) Children should first start to create stories from their own experiences. Have children select pictures and tell you a story. For example, *"This is a family going to the store,"* or *"This is a mom fixing dinner for her family."*

When children are comfortable creating stories, take the pictures and place them in a bag, mix them up, and have children select a number of pictures at random. Then, have young learners create a story from the pictures they selected. This forces children to go beyond the familiar. When children are successful at this activity, have them create "add on" stories. Let children take turns selecting a picture from the bag and adding what is in the picture to the story. For example, first student: *"This is a duck;"* second student: *"He swims in a pond;"* third student: *"And he lives in this house."* The stories don't need to be logical or even make sense. This type of activity pushes children to go beyond what is considered "normal." The stories children develop are usually funny, silly, and creative.

To broaden young learners' storytelling abilities, start with a sentence and have each one add something to it. For example: *"I was flying to the moon and on my way I ran into a___"* or *"I went to the circus with my family and I saw a___"* The more you play with this activity the more imaginative your children become.

Young learners can create their own "drawing" stories. Have them create a story through their own pictures (using crayons, paints, or markers). If they need ideas to get them started, use short sentences and let them fill in the rest. For example,

▶ *If I could go anywhere I would travel to ___ and see ___*

▶ *If I could make the biggest and best dessert it would start with___.*

▶ *If I were a magician I would cast a spell on ___.*

These stories could be laminated and made into a book. The class could have a storytelling day where children show and tell their stories to parents and friends.

If possible, bring in local storytellers. Local libraries usually will have a list. Let children experience the art of storytelling. Set the mood for the storyteller and students listening. Create an environment free from distractions and make the experience special by dimming the lights, creating a story circle with chairs or logs, or lighting a candle.

In any of these activities, remember to stress to your children that there is no right way to create a story. The creation and the sharing of stories are the most important parts of the process and they are always better when fun is added to them.

TURNING CHARTS INTO BOOKS

by Mary Beth Spann Minucci

Did you know that language experience charts can be easily turned into original class books? Follow the teacher-tested steps below. In no time at all, you will have published a series of child-written and illustrated publications to enjoy in class and to make available for children to share at home.

1 Keep large chart pads handy to record any and all thoughts that bubble up during classroom discussions. For the most meaningful responses, relate these discussions directly to children's experiences. For example, children will be better able to recount ways they avoid going to bed rather than telling why rest is healthful for them.

2 Try charting children's solutions to everyday problems. Or ask them to reflect on themselves and their feelings. For example, you might ask:

✏ *What do you really love to do?*

✏ *What do you when your feelings get hurt?*

✏ *What do you do when you don't feel like cleaning up?*

✏ *How do you help someone feel better when they are sick?*

✏ *What do you do when you are too sick to play?*

✏ *What do you do on a rainy day?*

✏ *What do you do when there's no one to play with?*

✏ *How do you make time pass quickly when you have to wait and wait?*

✏ *How do you feel when grown-ups ask you to share?*

3 After deciding on the topic of your chart, meet individually or in small groups with children to record their ideas. In this way, children will not grow weary of waiting for their turn, and will offer the most original responses.

4 Share the completed chart with the whole group. Have children print their names or initial next to their contribution.

5 As each child looks on, copy her line onto a separate piece of drawing paper. This helps to build the connection between thoughts and the spoken and written word so it is important for later learning.

6 Talk with children about individual illustration possibilities. Make certain children understand that their illustrations must match the words they dictated for you to record on the chart.

7 When you are satisfied they understand how to illustrate their words, have children illustrate their chart contributions on the prepared pieces of drawing paper.

8 Assemble completed pages as desired and bind (staple) together between pieces of construction paper. To present the authors to the readers, create a collage of children's pictures (by first arranging their photos face-down on a copy machine and then making copies of this collage). Glue the collage inside the back cover of the book.

9 For a different twist on this chart-to-book idea, read a book or tell a story to children. Then, have children take turns retelling parts of the book or story from the beginning to end. Then print contributions from two children onto one piece of drawing paper and have the children collaborate on the illustration. Assemble the pages in order and bind into a storybook children can read to themselves.

10 Read your collaborative in class. Then, circulate the book home with children so they may enjoy the story with their families.

MAKING A BOOK

by Donna Bird

Prepare your children to create their own books by reading many books to them. As you read, children will discover that stories have a beginning, middle, and end. They will discover that books are made of words and pictures, and that someday they will be able to read these words for themselves!

Enhance this learning by asking such questions as, *"What happened at the beginning of the book?" "Who is this book about?" "How does (main character) solve his problem?" "How does the book end?"* Use the pictures in the book to review the story and help children see the sequence of events.

When your group has a good understanding of what makes a book, they are ready to create some books of their own. The following book can be made as a class project or individually, with the story being very simple for younger groups.

To get started, you will need a main character. Older groups may want to choose or create their own, or you may wish to help by showing a picture, toy, doll, or stuffed animal to use as a main character. Establish a setting for your character by discussing such things as where does your character live, who are his friends and/or family, etc. Make notes of this information as it is decided on the chalkboard or chart paper.

Next comes the creative part—making up the story. Of course you will need to record what children say. Work individually with children, writing their words as they tell their story, for individual books. Having one or two extra adults at this stage will help keep things moving along.

Now, you will need to do some planning. Divide each book into pages so that there is a picture with appropriate text on the opposing page. For a group, you will want each child to have a page to illustrate his part of the story. The books can be any size, but standard sheets of white or manilla drawing paper work well for small hands. Covers should have the title and author of the book, along with a picture or colorful design. Perhaps use paints on the cover if the other illustrations are crayon. A Title Page will make the book more "authentic" for children.

On the back of the Title Page will be the illustration for the first page of the text. Each succeeding page will have text on the front and the illustration for the next page on the back. Lay out the pages for a book and number them, so it will be easier to know where each picture and text goes.

The text can be hand-printed or done on a typewriter or computer and then pasted on the appropriate page. Assemble your book, then bind it using staples (Hammer the back of the staples flat so no one will get stuck.) or punch holes to tie it together with yarn or ribbon.

MARBLEIZE A BOOK COVER

YOU'LL NEED: 3 small jars of enamel hobby paint (available at craft stores) ◆ plastic tub or disposable aluminum turkey roasting pan (larger than size of construction paper) ◆ water ◆ stick for stirring ◆ construction paper ◆ newspaper or dropcloth for covering the floor

WHAT TO DO:

1. Make sure each child is wearing a smock. Cover floor. Fill pan 1/2 way full with water.
2. Drizzle small drops of 2 or 3 different colors into water. They will float on top. Stir LIGHTLY so colors swirl.
3. Gently place a piece of paper on top of water and gently tap. Do not press it into water.
4. ADULT lifts paper out of water by holding 2 corners.
5. Let it dry. Glue onto cardboard for front book cover. Use plain cardboard for a back cover. Punch holes and attach with yarn or notebook rings.

SOUND STORIES

by Margery A. Kranyik

Reading is rhythm. Reading is sound. It's a combination that is a natural to capture children's attention. Many children's stories contain passages that "speak" to children's sense of rhythm. Have them experiment with rhythm instruments and body sounds to enhance their enjoyment of these stories.

Read *Thump, Thump, Rat-a-Tat-Tat* by Gene Baer (Harper & Row). Children can imitate the trumpet and drum sounds with clapping (rat-a-tat-tat) and patting their lap—also known as patching (Thump, thump, thump, thump). Let them choose a rhythm instrument that they feel matches the sound. Joining in with exaggerated voicing of thump, thump and rat-a-tat-tat helps make a colorful storybook even more exciting. Try a similar action with *Chick-a-Boom Boom* by the same author.

Read *Old MacDonald Had a Farm* by Pam Adams (Child's Play). Encourage children to make their best animal sounds as you read or sing the story. Follow up by having them choose rhythm instruments that come closest to recreating the animal sounds in the story. Tape record the results for a fun sing-along later.

Read *The Wheels on the Bus* by Maryann Kovalski (Trumpet Club). Again, have children select instruments to represent *bump, toot, swish, waa, sssh.* Add new verses and new instruments. Supplement the instrumental sounds with body percussion —clapping, stamping, rubbing palms back and forth. Children will not be at a loss for creative ideas.

Try *Thunder Storm* by Mary Szilagyi (Bradbury Press). Set out an assortment of drums, triangles, and cymbals for children to create a thunderstorm. Add a sheet of aluminum foil for lighting! How many ways can children use their bodies to sound like raindrops and thunder?

Read *The Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything* by Linda Williams (Harper Collins). Introduce this story to children as a flannelboard tale. Allow children to create their own sounds and accompany the noise and action words in the story: clomp, wiggle, shake, clap, nod, boo.

Sensitize children to the various sounds in their environment. Read *The Listening Walk* by Paul Showers (Crowell). Take a walk and listen to the sounds around your school and neighborhood. Take along a tape recorder to record sounds for children to recall or play guessing games at a later time.

Read also *Crash, Bang, Boom* by Peter Spier (Doubleday). The text approximates the sounds of the objects depicted on each page.

Collect various materials for a sound effects box, bin or basket. Empty tubes, sticks, utensils, pot lids, and other objects can produce a variety of sounds to enhance stories and poems. Be alert to yard sale and flea market books that may lend themselves to exciting and creative sound effects.

HEARTS MEAN LOVE

by Jeannine Perez

Hearts are symbols of love. These symbols can reinforce the concept of sharing that goes far beyond the exchange of paper valentines and candy once a year at a party. It is said that big changes in our world often begin in small ways. In today's impatient society, let's take time to do small things with our small people, and thus encourage them to shape a beautiful future by caring and sharing.

Here are a few ways you can connect stories about friendship with valentine projects that act as incentives and reminders to be kind to others.

Begin by reading *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein (Harper & Row). It has a message for all ages, and motivates conversation about ways to make and be a good friend. Other favorite stories in our class are *Amos & Boris* by William Steig (Penguin), *Friends* by Helme Heine (Alladin), and *Earnest and Celestine* by Vincent Gabrielle (Morrow). After reading these books, we talk about what we like about our friends and make an experience chart list of characteristics of friends.

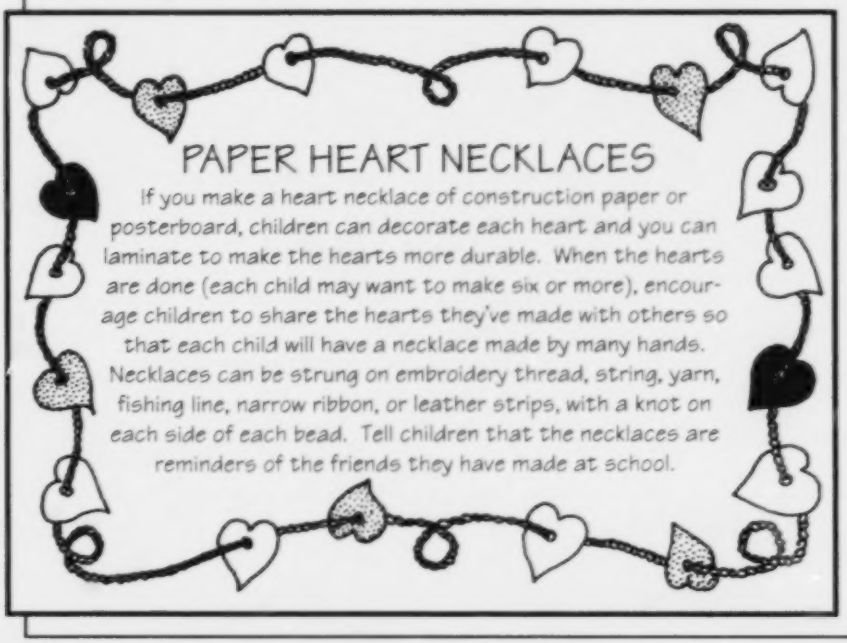
HEART NECKLACES

Next, we make necklaces to remind us to share and be good friends. You may use salt clay, Fimo, Sculpey or other oven-baked clay, ceramic clay that needs to be fired, or cardboard or paper to make the necklaces (see below).

BULLETIN BOARDS

❤ **Love All Over** Creating a bulletin board together is a great way to encourage cooperation and sharing. Cover the board with bright colored paper and decide together how to decorate it. You may simply practice cutting hearts of many sizes and colors. Help children carefully fold their papers in half and then cut an ear shape, beginning and ending on the folded part. Cover the board with hearts.

❤ **Patchwork Hearts** Cut fairly large hearts from many kinds of fabric, then cut each heart into three parts. All hearts should be cut on the same lines so that each heart has identical parts. Give each child a heart and tell him to trade sections with others so that they will put together a patchwork-type heart. Help children glue their hearts to squares of colored posterboard and decorate with markers (to look like stitching). Attach the squares to a bulletin board to make a heart quilt. Later children can take their patchwork hearts home as a Valentine's Day gift.


PAPER HEART NECKLACES
If you make a heart necklace of construction paper or posterboard, children can decorate each heart and you can laminate to make the hearts more durable. When the hearts are done (each child may want to make six or more), encourage children to share the hearts they've made with others so that each child will have a necklace made by many hands. Necklaces can be strung on embroidery thread, string, yarn, fishing line, narrow ribbon, or leather strips, with a knot on each side of each bead. Tell children that the necklaces are reminders of the friends they have made at school.

HEART COOKIES

YOU'LL NEED: 3/4 cup peanut butter ❥ 1/2 cup margarine ❥ 1/4 cup shortening ❥ 1 tsp. vanilla ❥ 1 egg ❥ 1 small jar-raspberry jam ❥ 3 cups flour ❥ 2 TBLSP. milk ❥ rolling pin ❥ heart shape cookie cutters ❥ mixer ❥ plastic knife (for spreading jam) ❥ cookie sheet ❥ cooling rack

WHAT TO DO:

1. Beat margarine, shortening, and peanut butter well. Add egg and beat well.
2. Add sugar, flour, vanilla, and milk to mixture.
3. Chill 2 hours or more.
4. Roll dough on lightly floured board to 1/4 inch thick. Cut out heart shapes with cookie cutters.
5. Place on a lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350°F for 8-10 minutes (until lightly browned). ADULT removes to a cooling rack.
6. Spread 1 tsp. jam on a cookie and cover with another cookie for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich effect.

A STORY WITH HEART

At this point, I usually tell a story to children. At circle time I sit with a giant paper heart pinned to the front of my shirt. I tell children that the heart shows how I feel, and whenever I look down at it I remember that I am special and important. Then I begin describing a "terrible" rainy day to them. Perhaps the day began when I woke up too late to eat a good breakfast. I tear a bit off my paper heart to show that the rush has taken a bit of my perfect day. What if I couldn't find my shoes? Another piece is torn off. When I get to school I slip in a puddle and get my clothes wet and muddy. A bigger piece is torn off. Oh, how terrible when everyone laughs as I straggle through the door! The biggest piece comes off. We talk together about how I would feel if my day had actually gone like that, and the not-so-perfect days that happen to everyone. We try problem-solving together to discover what we could do to help others who may be having a bad day. Usually children want to tell and retell "terrible day" stories complete with paper hearts. *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst (Atheneum) is a good book to read. Through this story, we also become more aware of others' feelings.

ART WITH HEART

❤ **People with Heart** Cut out a variety of hearts in all colors and sizes. Put them on the center of the worktable with glue and sheets of construction paper. Help children glue the hearts on the paper to create valentine people and animals.

❤ **Heart Borders** Make heart-shaped borders and strips the same way you've done paper dolls. Fold tissue or other lightweight paper accordion style, then cut half a heart one each, being sure that the folds are not completely cut through. Use the strips to decorate doorways and windows.

❤ **Heart T-Shirts** Ask children to bring old white T-shirts from home. Use fabric paint to embellish the shirts with hearts, flowers, birds, and kisses.

❤ **Hidden Hearts** Help children draw pictures that include as many hidden hearts as possible. For example, trees can have heart leaves. Upside down hearts can make tulips. Draw birds and animals with heart-shaped parts. Let children make partner pictures. Then trade pictures with another pair and ask children to find and color as many heart-shaped items as possible.

BOOKS TO READ

❣ *My Book of Funny Valentines* by Margo Lundell (Scholastic)

❣ *Be My Valentine* by M.J. Carr (Scholastic)

End your celebration with some heart-shaped cookies (You'll find the recipe above.) and strawberry punch.

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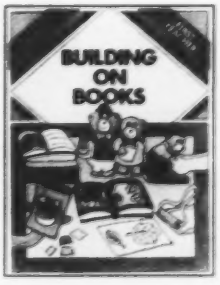

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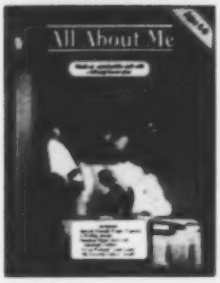

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FIRST TEACHER

Vol. 17 No. 2 *For People Who Care for Young Children* March/April 1996

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People in the Neighborhood

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Plan a Career Week
- Interview School Helpers
- Recruit Senior Volunteers
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- Visit the Mayor
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Art Director ..... Debby Dixler
Editorial and Content Advisors ..... Kathy Faggella, Mary Beth Spann Minucci
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Logo Design ..... Gene Krackehl
Contributing Photographer ..... Peter Lewin
Production ..... Nina Woldin and Debby Dixler
Editorial Assistant ..... Christine Manavian,
Advertising Inquiries..... 1-800-781-7275

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

by Lisa Lyons Durkin

What wonderful things your children can discover when they explore their neighborhood! And what better time to do the exploring than when the world blossoms with signs of spring! This issue of *First Teacher* takes children beyond the walls of your classroom, beyond their houses and apartments to learn about the people and places that are part of "their world." These discoveries play an important part in a child's development because before children can begin to become members of the "global community we hear so much about today, they must trust and be comfortable with their immediate environment.

Children like to help. Sherry Burrell gives you lots of ideas for jobs children can do to help in the classroom as an introduction to learning about community helpers. "Blue Plate Special" describes how a class of toddlers turned their classroom into a restaurant and learned all about what is needed to create and serve meals to parents and friends.

Once they become helpers, children become interested in the people who help *them*. Susan Entz suggests that you use senior citizens as helpers in the classroom to enhance your program. And Mary Beth Spann Minucci encourages you to help your children interview the many helpers who work at school.

Take field trips to meet people in helping jobs in your community. When children learn about police officers, fire fighters, and even weather forecasters, they can find out a lot about safety as Barbara Fischer explains in her article, "Safety First."

If the weather isn't perfect for outside explorations, consider inviting your neighborhood to visit your class. Karen Stephens gives you detailed instructions for preparing your children—and the visitor—for the best encounter possible, along with fun follow-up activities. From retired artisans, storytellers, and musicians to parents who are builders, bankers, or deli workers, you'll find lists of visitors that are rich in learning possibilities.

In this issue, we are introducing a new feature on using photography to create simple, visual, learning experiences with your children. This feature will be written by educators involved with the Polaroid Education Program, an exciting program you'll hear more about in the months to come.

So grab your coat and your kids—and meet the people in your neighborhood!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

✎ **Susan Rinas** has been a family child care provider for seven years in Parma, OH. Before this, she worked with children in a daycare center and was a playground supervisor. Susan has two children of her own.

✎ **Tom Crockett** is a writer, photographer, and educator with an extensive background in creativity, photography, and visual learning. He has been a secondary school teacher in Norfolk VA, where he was recognized in 1990 as an outstanding educator by the Norfolk Jaycees. Tom and his wife Meredith also direct the Polaroid Education Program for the southeastern United States Tom conducts workshops in visual learning for fellow educators and students of all ages. He has designed curriculum for early childhood education and self-esteem for Polaroid, other publishers, and the Discovery Channel.

✎ In addition to *First Teacher*, **Mary Beth Spann Minucci** also works as contributing editor to Scholastic's *Instructor* magazine and writes and edits teacher resource books for Scholastic Professional Books. Recent titles include *Exploring the Number 1 to 100: Activities, Learning Center Ideas and Celebrations* and *Quick-and-Easy Centers: Word Play*.

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Peter Lewin: cover, pages 10, 16, 26, 27, 33

ART CREDITS

Beth Ann Bogert-Bispham: pages 24

Debby Dixler: pages 8, 9, 17, 18, 19-22, 23, 29

Catherine Minor: pages 11, 12, 13, 28, 30

Nina Woldin: 4, 7, 25, 34, 35

HELPFUL HINTS

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

by Gail P. Jones

Encourage your children to appreciate the people in their neighborhoods by having each child "report on" one important person (with parental help). Assign the people so a variety are selected and interviewed. Encourage children to draw pictures and dictate stories about their specific person. Use the pictures for a class book. Local newspapers may even find the results of interest!

Create a hands-on bulletin board or table game where children can match the tools of the trade with the community helper who uses them.

Encourage children to role-play as many community helpers as they can from both the helper's and the person being helped's points of view.

Invite members of the community to visit the classroom and share their experiences as well as taking field trips whenever possible.

This theme gives you a great opportunity to teach how to use the phone in an emergency. Use two real discarded telephones and let children call for help by dialing 911 or whatever phone number is necessary in your area. When the responding dispatcher (model the dialogue before children try it) asks for their address and full name, children will quickly realize the necessity of learning this information!

Let children pretend to be lost in various locations in their community so they can roleplay what to do in these situations. Again emphasize the need to know their own phone numbers. Let them trace their phone numbers and put them in a class phone book so they can "call" each other in class.

Include a variety of dress-up clothes and props for a number of community helpers in the dramatic play area.

Use community helper "knowledge" for transitions. For example: *"If you know who directs traffic, raise your hand."* Call children's names and ask them to line up as they give the correct answer.

While focusing on all of the helpful people in the community, why not discuss all those who may need help such as the elderly, infirm, homeless, children, etc. Brainstorm ways to be "young community helpers" in solving some of their problems.

CAREERS FOR KIDS

by Sherry Burrell

Young children love the idea of having a "job." To them, it means feeling part of the grown-up world. Having a "job title" holds magical power for them and completing the job successfully instills a sense of pride, self respect, and accomplishment. You can set the stage for children to develop "habits of helping" by providing a program that enables each child to "hold a job." You can extend that effort into a more comprehensive project that includes exposure to many different kinds of jobs out in the real world. Some valuable learning will take place!

TIME WELL SPENT

Fortunately, young children see just as much value in becoming a farmer, a truck driver, or a sanitation worker as they do in becoming a banker, a surgeon, or an attorney. When you set up a program in which class jobs are modeled after real-world jobs, each child feels both needed and respected. While it may take a few extra minutes to complete each of the your tasks when a child is a "helper," that time is very well spent. It pays in dividends over and over again, because children see the classroom as "theirs." They understand that their efforts and contributions matter, and they work harder every day to treat their classroom, their teachers, and other children with more respect and with a more cooperative attitude. It does take extra time, but IT IS TIME WELL SPENT!

DRAMATIC PLAY JOBS

Once the classroom is set up with daily routines that promote this kind of respect for all jobs, a natural follow-up is a series of dramatic play opportunities that give children a better understanding of many different jobs. One way to approach this is to send a note home to parents requesting their support. Many parents, armed with a letter from their child's school, may be able to get "release-time" from their jobs if the school indicates that it will publish their participation in a school newsletter (free advertising)! Parents from all walks of life may be willing to send in "sample packets of work supplies" from their places of business. These supplies, along with parent visitors who might share their jobs in person with the class, will enable children to learn what it might be like to be a chef, a banker, a barber, a salesperson, a secretary, a doctor, a lab technician, a gardener, a truck driver, a maintenance worker, and so on.

CAREER WEEK

Send a notice home to parents so they can help their children prepare. During "career week," assign each child one day of the week, so that a small group of children shares each day. Have those children dress up like a person from the career of their choice. Suggest that they bring in tools and props that will help tell something about that career. The choice of the career may be left totally open, or you might suggest that each child choose a job that one of her parents has held at some time in their lives. Ask parents to "coach" their child so that the child is able to tell a little about the chosen profession. It helps if parents also write a short explanation of the job on an index card so that everyone will have a better idea of what responsibilities and skills are required.

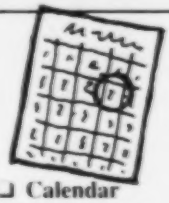
When young children are exposed to the idea that all jobs have merit, and when they realize that doing your best at any job can be a source of pride, those children gain a more accepting attitude toward the world of work in general. Hopefully, a side-effect of such an attitude would be an increased respect for all professions, careers, or jobs in later life!

TYPICAL (AND NOT SO TYPICAL) CLASS JOBS

❑ **Receptionist or Greeter** (shake hands and greet friends by name as they arrive)

❑ **Class Monitor or Attendance Keeper** (take attendance by noticing "who is absent")

❑ **Morning Meeting Leader** (responsible for choosing or carrying out the first activities in the morning meeting —flag salute, special good-morning song, etc.)



❑ **Calendar Keeper** (put the correct date on the calendar, and report it to the class)

❑ **Weather Watcher** (notice, record, and report the weather to the class)

❑ **Sharing Leader or Junior Teacher** (responsible for calling on children whose turn it is to share during Show-and-Tell time)

❑ **Table Setters** or **Dining Room Personnel** (help set tables before snack or lunch times)

❑ **Maintenance Person or Janitor** (responsible for using a non-electric push-type carpet sweeper on the rugs and/or a dust pan and broom on the floors)

❑ **Junior Electrician or Light Monitor** (responsible for turning the lights on when you enter the classroom and off when you leave)

❑ **Line Leader** (leads the line. This avoids arguments and carries responsibility with it as well.)

❑ **Line Ender or Line Supervisor** (to some, this is just as exciting as "line leader" — watch to see that all children are staying together in the line, and report any "wanderers" to an adult at once)

❑ **Class Musician** (responsible for accompanying the week's songs with a rhythm instrument)

❑ **Class Messengers** (take messages to appropriate locations within the school — always go in pairs!)

❑ **Area Supervisor** (Area supervisors are assigned to each of your classroom learning centers. These children are responsible for helping to clean the area at "clean-up" time.)

❑ **Class Veterinarian or Pet Vet** (responsible for caring for the class pet(s) everyday by providing food, water, exercise, and love)

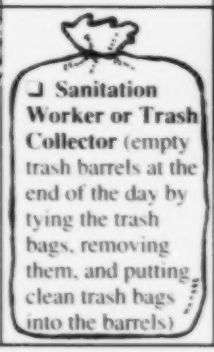
❑ **Class Gardener or Plant Helper** (check the plants every day, and water when appropriate)

❑ **Bus-Boys and Bus-Girls** (help clear the tables and wash them off at the end of mealtimes)

❑ **Waiters and Waitresses** (help deliver food to the tables during meal)

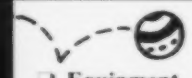
❑ **Recycle Supervisor** (help collect and store recycle materials such as scrap paper or collect materials to be used for craft projects)

❑ **Banking Aide or Treasurer** (when money or permission slips are handed in, help the teacher by checking off the names of children who have handed them in)



❑ **Sanitation Worker or Trash Collector** (empty trash barrels at the end of the day by tying the trash bags, removing them, and putting clean trash bags into the barrels)

❑ **Class Mediator or Problem-Solver** (help other children solve problems they are having with one another)



❑ **Equipment Supervisor or Recess Aide** (help bring the balls and riding toys outside for recess or help set up the equipment for large motor activities)

❑ **Class Secretary** (write, dictate, or illustrate notes from the class to visitors, parents, community people, etc.—or help keep a class "journal" of special "news of the day")

TAILOR YOUR OWN JOB TO OFFER THE CHILDREN IN YOUR CLASS THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP WITH MANY OF THE DAILY ROUTINES OF YOUR PROGRAM!

TODDLER TIME

BLUE PLATE SPECIAL

by Jeannine Perez

What could be more exciting than a delicious meal prepared and served by toddlers to appreciative parents and other classes? This project caught everyone's fancy and taught our toddlers decision-making, problem-solving, and careful planning. We worked nutrition, personal hygiene, good manners, math/money, food vocabulary, table setting, and cooking into our plans. We increased our plans from a single day to a week of luncheons. The timeline for our project looked something like this.

1. Name our restaurant. Because we were having a lot of fun learning about insects and spiders at the time we planned our restaurant, we decided to make them our theme. The *Grasshopper Cafe* won over all other names we brainstormed.

What other themes could you use? You and your children could plan a dress-up English Tea, or a Mexican Fiesta. You could use recipes from other countries also. How about a Bear Party, Stone Soup, Pancakes for Breakfast, Three Bear's Porridge, or a Picnic with Frog and Toad?

2. Print our recipes in rebus form on flip charts. We used as many pictures and symbols as possible to show amounts and ingredients, and we also talked about and added common sense rules such as washing hands, not licking fingers while mixing, sharing work, and clean-up hints.

3. Practice measuring and mixing. We did this in our water table, sandbox, and in the housekeeping corner. We practiced measuring, dumping, and stirring.

4. Role play different parts. We made sure that each child had a chance to experience being a cook, cashier, waiter, janitor, dishwasher, advertising executive, etc., and we talked about what each job description would include. After our first meal was served, we decided to expand our roles and to add wandering troubadours to entertain the next day's guests. They serenaded our patrons with songs such as "*I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*," and "*There's a Spider on the Floor*."

5. Trial run! We tried out our recipes, then ate and critiqued them. We changed a few ideas, and even discarded a recipe that no one liked! The toddlers were remarkably objective and professional in their comments. We compared our food choices to the food pyramid chart supplied to us by the cafeteria to be sure we included meat or meat substitute, veggies and fruits, bread or cereal products, and milk or dairy products. Putting foods in categories is difficult for very young children, but they did well, and we laid the foundation for future nutrition education.

6. Plan a centerpiece. For our centerpiece, we filled a large basket with fruits and vegetables, and made paper and pipe cleaner insects to nestle between them.

7. Make tablecloths and aprons. We cut a white sheet into four smaller cloths, decorated them with everyone's handprints and signatures, and made aprons for our restaurant employees from paper napkins, using five to eight stapled together for each apron. The aprons were constructed by folding one corner of the stack over a ribbon waistband and stapling in place. As a layer becomes soiled or rumpled, simply tear it off! (Note: these aprons cannot withstand heavy spills!)

8. Decide on a time and make invitations and tickets (if you use them). Use tickets, tokens, or play money. We set up a cash register and gave children from other classes play money for practice in identifying coins and making change. We charged a set rate (of play money) for the meal to simplify the change. We gave parents tickets (gift certificates) for our meal (specifying times for their reservations), and did ask them for contributions of groceries used in the recipes.

9. Design menus. Fold large sheets of construction paper in half for colorful menus. You could copy one child's design for all the menu covers, or use a different child's insect and spider designs on each cover. We printed some favorite riddles and short poems on the inside covers, and had everyone's signature and thank you's to parents and helpers on the back.

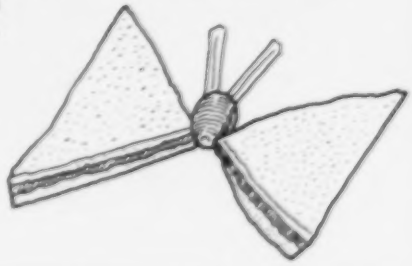
10. Enjoy! Take time to enjoy the interactions between adults and young children during the luncheon. Cleanup is also fun, because everyone feels successful. After each meal, we talked about what was right about our ideas and what ideas we could change for next year.

BUGGY RECIPES THAT WORKED FOR US

*(**Note:** children participated in some part of all food preparation, but did not chop vegetables or come in contact with hot soup. Even when procedures were too complicated for them to do safely, there was always some way they could help. As much as possible I gave the children choices, asked their opinions, and encouraged them to help.)*

Butterfly Sandwiches

Cut bread slices in half diagonally. Help children spread with softened cream cheese that has been colored with a small amount of food coloring. Place bread with corners together to form butterfly wings. Decorated with skinny carrot stick antennae and an olive head. If you find that no one really likes cream cheese, you could substitute peanut butter and jelly.

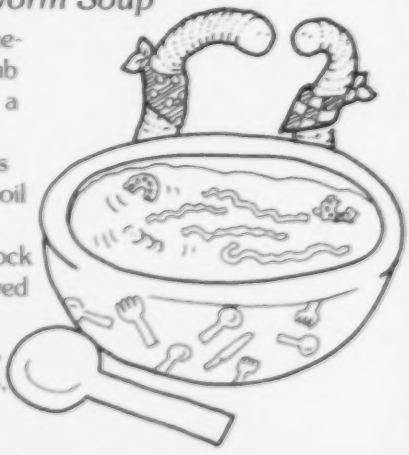


Water Bug Juice

Mix together a 16-ounce can of frozen concentrated orange juice, a 16-ounce can of frozen concentrated pineapple juice, a 16-ounce can of frozen concentrated lemonade, 1 pkg. lime Koolaid, and water as directed. Makes about 50 4-ounce servings. You can substitute almost any juices you prefer.

Garden Worm Soup

We decided our meal needed something warm. Children helped scrub vegetables and I chopped carrots, a small onion, some celery, dried parsley, and a potato into 2 quarts of cold water, then brought to a boil and simmered for about half and hour, adding seasoned chicken stock (or a chicken boullion cube dissolved in water) after about 20 minutes. When the vegetables were tender, we added a cup of skinny noodles, and cooked about 13 minutes longer.



SPECIAL VISITOR TIMES

by Karen Stephens

A great way to help children learn about the individuals who make up their community is to invite special visitors to the classroom. Special visitors are one way to help children learn how individual people make contributions to the well-being of the whole community. During special visitor time, children learn skills and concepts as well as developing a sense of belonging to the world beyond their immediate family.

Special visitors traditionally include people who are "community helpers," such as fire fighters or police officers. While these are certainly exciting people for children to learn about, I recommend you also introduce people in the neighborhood who have more direct contact with children.

By inviting "real" people that children know into the classroom, learning will be less abstract for children. It will also help children see there are many, many jobs needed to make a community run effectively for its citizens—not just emergency jobs.

At the top of the next page there are some suggestions of people that children may have contact with on a daily or weekly basis. They are people children may be familiar with through family, child care, or preschool experiences.

After you explore neighborhood special visitors, you can branch out to the broader world by including **Community Special Visitors**. These are people that children may be less familiar with. Nonetheless, these special visitors help make the community run more smoothly, and therefore affect children's lives.

PREPARING CHILDREN FOR A SPECIAL VISITOR

Teaching children to be friendly, respectful hosts is an important social skill. This is a good time to remind children that the visitor will be more at ease if they talk one at a time, listen well, and ask before touching display items.

Beyond learning social skills, special visitors provide an opportunity for children to acquire new knowledge and develop concepts. Special visitors are usually more meaningful for children when they know what to expect. You can prepare children for visitors by:

★ discussing at group time the visitor's role in neighborhood activities;

★ reading children's books about people like the special visitor (see the suggestions *In*

Neighborhood Special Visitor Possibilities

milk carrier ★ postal carrier ★ custodian ★ secretary ★ groundskeeper ★ grocery store clerk ★ ice cream parlor owner ★ shoe store salesperson ★ veterinarian ★ nurse/doctor ★ manager from a local discount chain ★ bank teller ★ dry cleaner or laundromat owner ★ children's librarian ★ toy store owner ★ construction worker ★ high school band leader ★ cheerleader ★ sports coach ★ telephone technician ★ plumber ★ electrician ★ carpenter

Community Special Visitors

police officer ★ fire fighter ★ mayor ★ radio announcer ★ television weather person ★ dentist ★ doctor/nurse ★ park ranger ★ zoo keeper ★ veterinarian ★ farmer ★ newspaper journalist ★ airline pilot ★ train engineer ★ public school principal ★ artist (such as a painter or weaver) ★ theme park character ★ girl or boy scout leader ★ semi-truck driver

the Book Corner);
★ singing songs or doing fingerplays (such as "Wheels on the Bus" for a bus driver);
★ playing a video that shows what the special visitor does;
★ taking a field trip to see the special visitor "on the job";
★ creating a dramatic play center around the visitor;
★ sending information home in the parent newsletter;
★ creating a bulletin board about the special visitor.

PREPARING THE SPECIAL VISITOR FOR THE CHILDREN

Some people can be a bit intimidated when talking to a group of young children. Give them some guidance to set them at ease. Provide them with a list of questions children may ask. Give them suggestions on information about themselves or their role in the neighborhood/community that will be of interest to children.

Give the special visitor an idea of how long the group's attention span is. Suggest some "hands-on" items the special visitor can bring to capture children's interest. For instance, a milk carrier might bring in an order pad, trolley, and milk crates. Letting children tour the refrigerated truck would be a big hit, too!

You may need to help special visitors decide how to present their information simply so young children can understand it. Remember to point out necessary safety precautions. It's typically best to schedule special visitors during a time of day when children are most alert.

FOLLOW-UP SPECIAL VISITOR ACTIVITIES

The learning opportunities aren't over the minute a special visitor leaves the classroom. There's more for children to learn if you plan meaningful follow-up activities.

Help children learn to show appreciation by having them dictate a thank-you letter to the special visitor. Let children make cards or pictures in the art center as well. It's nice to take photos during special visits so a picture can be included in the thank-you letter.

For at least a few days after the special visit, display related children's books and read them at group time. Add more props to the dramatic play center so children can act out scenes related to the special visitor. Take a field trip to "visit the visitor"! Children are likely to notice much more detail in a follow-up visit. Let children dictate a book or language chart describing all they saw and learned from the special visitor.

Finally, compile pictures you took and put them in the class photo album. Your children can revisit their memories of the special visitor through the photographs.

SENIOR CITIZEN VISITORS

by Barbara F. Backer

Today's children are accustomed to buying almost everything in a store. Few modern parents have time to sew, to grow and can their own foods, or even to cook foods from scratch. How many preschoolers have seen lengths of fabric magically joined together by a sewing machine, pieces of wood transformed into toys by sawing and hand finishing, or one long length of yarn becoming a sweater as it is woven by a crochet hook or knitting needle?

Yet our neighborhoods and communities are full of senior citizens who are now finding time to pursue these interests. Think about inviting these "neighbors" into your classroom to share their talents and hobbies with children.

People with collections are fascinating guests. Dolls, kaleidoscopes, spoons, teddy bears, carved horses, postcards, and more are sure to capture children's attention. Be certain the visitor brings some items children can touch. Then children will respect the value of the additional, "untouchable" items on display.

Sewing by hand, knitting, and crocheting are impressive procedures that help children understand how their clothing is made. Invite a visitor to show children how to sew on a button (Use a large one so everyone can see.) or how a scarf is made. Perhaps **a guest who knits or crochets** will donate a blanket for the doll's bed.

A neighbor who brings a portable sewing machine can stitch up capes or tutus in front of your children. Place the finished results in the Dramatic Play Center.

Invite an **artist** to show children brush techniques and a potter to inspire new creations in clay. Some potters will work with your children, then fire their works in a kiln.

Ask your librarian for the name of a **storyteller** who understands and enjoys young children. Invite him to your class to introduce the experience of listening to a story that has no pictures.

Children are always interested in cooking and eating, and

it's easy to find **retired people who like to cook**. Let neighbors show how to make pasta from scratch, how to knead bread dough, how to decorate birthday cakes, and how to roll pie crust or cookie dough. Then let children try their hands at making some recipes.

Invite an **animal breeder** to class to show off her dogs, birds, or cats. This neighbor can teach children about safety around animals and about responsible animal care. A gardener can show how to prepare the ground for planting and may supply small shrubs or plants for children to plant

Invite a **new grandmother** to bring her grandchild to show children the baby's fingers and toes and his tiny clothes. Some grandmothers are willing to bathe the baby in class. Then set up dishpans of water so children can wash the class' baby dolls.

Visitors can help you in other ways, too. Are you timid about setting up a class woodworking center? Ask **someone skilled in furniture refinishing, cabinet making, or other carpentry work** to visit your class, help you set up the center, and teach children the safe way to use the woodworking hand tools.

Children learn from visitors, and you will too. I learned to cook in a wok when an Asian visitor demonstrated authentic Chinese cooking, and I learned the best way to wash hands froma **visiting nurse**.

One neighborhood guest removed some parts of our piano so we could see what happened inside as she struck the keys. Another brought and played his guitar, and children compared the different ways the strings of these two instruments were played. Another guest brought and played his French horn. Children were especially intrigued by the function of the spit valve!

Everyone benefits from neighbors' visits. Children learn from people who have time to share, and visitors gain from children's energy, enthusiasm, and joy in living. So keep the welcome mat out, and when you need a lift, invite a neighbor in.

SOMEBODY'S GRANDMA

by Susan Entz

Children often live some distance from their own grandparents, but would benefit from surrogates in their daily lives. Recruit older folks — males and females — in the neighborhood to become regular classroom volunteers.

RECRUITMENT

Make "wanted" posters and fliers, identifying the need for senior citizen volunteers for one or two mornings each week at your school and a contact name and phone number.

Distribute these materials to senior citizen groups, activity directors of programs for older citizens, church groups, and groups of retired groups such as school teachers.

Write a letter to the editor in a neighborhood publication requesting volunteers.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Volunteers of any age fit into the classroom best when they know what is expected of them. Hold a short orientation for new volunteers covering the following topics:

- Overview of the program
- Importance of role models and close relationships to the young child.
- Value staff places on volunteers
- Daily routines and schedules
- Procedures, such as hand washing and sanitation
- Guidance strategies for handling conflict and children with specific challenges
- Overview of volunteer jobs

Talk with each senior to establish when they will be in class and specifically what they will be doing on their first few visits.

After orientation, schedule regular training sessions for volunteers. These get-togethers give volunteers a better idea of what is happening in the classroom and why it is important.

SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

Volunteers need feedback. The need to know that they are needed, wanted, and valued. The volunteer may not know exactly what to do in every classroom situation. Don't be afraid to help a new volunteer to fit into this new situation appropriately. This may mean making gentle corrections in the beginning and giving guidance as time goes on.

Finding time to meet with each volunteer may be a challenge. Set up procedures to provide regular opportunities for support and supervision.

Develop a *Volunteer Check-In/Check Out folder* with a page for each volunteer. Use it as a communications log, giving the seniors a place to record problems, concerns, observations, and comments and a place for you to remind them frequently what a valuable service they are performing.

VOLUNTEER JOB CARDS

Once a senior has established a routine, write out requests for a variety of tasks that need to be completed.

Ask volunteers to read the task cards as they check in and select a special job in addition to their "regular"duties of reading to children, recording their dictated stories, helping with art or cooking projects, and cuddling a child in need of a hug.

SPECIAL SKILLS

Seniors come with a wealth of life experiences. Find out what special talents, skills, or knowledge the volunteer might

be willing to share with children and staff.

RECOGNITION, RECOGNITION!

The only way to pay a volunteer Grandma/Grandpa is with love and acknowledgement. Take every opportunity to let volunteers know that they are appreciated.

Have children make a special gift for the senior's birthday, celebrate Grandparents Day, and include them in holiday gift giving. Dedicate a song sung by the group to a volunteer at a parents' meeting and feature each senior periodically in your newsletter. Include volunteer recognition in the end-of-the-year ceremonies. Finally, never let a day go by without a hug.

APPRECIATION SONG

(Tune: "Are You Sleeping")

Grandpa Harry,
Grandma Sarah,
You're our friends,
You're our pals,
Thanks for playing with us,
Thanks for singing with us,
We'll miss you
We'll miss you.

Volunteer Job

NEEDED BY: Tuesday morning

ACTIVITY: making play dough

DESCRIPTION:
Find 1-3 children who would like to help you make a batch of play dough. Use equipment under sink and the recipe on the back of this card.

Volunteer Job

NEEDED BY: whenever Jesse looks lonely

ACTIVITY: hugs and love

DESCRIPTION: Jesse is having a hard time adjusting to school. She misses her mom terribly. She's responding well to quiet time in the rocking chair with an adult, looking at picture books. Invite her to rock with you.

Volunteer Job

NEEDED BY: 9/20/96

ACTIVITY: cutting egg shapes

DESCRIPTION:
cut out large egg shape from finger painting paper for art projects (see attached paper)

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PARENTS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

by Sandra Gratias

A unit on people and their jobs and tools is a perfect opportunity for field trips and classroom visitors. But how do you find places that are open to preschooler visits or people who can talk to little ones! Parents may be the answer! They may be able to arrange work tours for their child and his class that you, just "out of the blue," could not. They also know how to talk to young children because they have one at home.

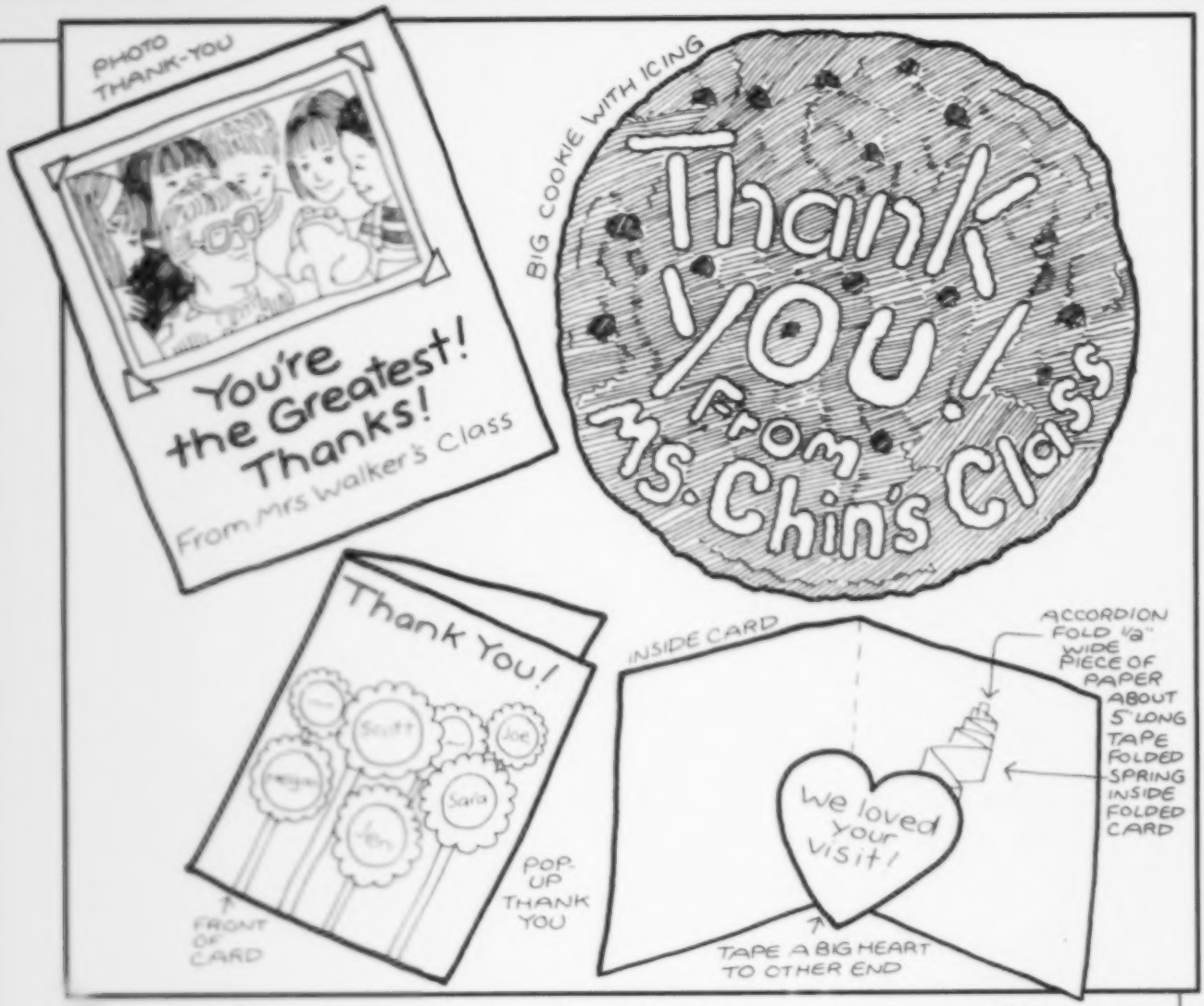
Over the years, I have tapped this resource and had an interesting parade of classroom visitors: a real estate agent, banker, band leader, deli worker, musician, nurse, police officer, research biologist, factory worker, food store owner, builder, dairy farmer, and dump truck driver.

To get parents to come, I always begin by explaining the unit and issuing a general invitation to the parents in my newsletter. Sometimes I get a good response and sometimes I get none. In the latter case, it works better to look over your applications to see what jobs parents have and approach some of the more outgoing parents in person.

I have found that the main obstacle to getting a parent to come in and talk is not time scheduling, but lack of self-confidence. Questions like *"How can I keep their attention?" "How can I make it interesting?"* and *"How can I explain it so they understand?"* are common. Parents need encouragement and tips from you, the teacher. Assure them that you will remain in the room to manage classroom behavior. Then make suggestions to help them plan their talk. Remind them to keep presentations basic and short. Tell them to use simple vocabulary and help them figure out how to explain processes and business terms with a frame of reference appropriate to a three, four, or five year old. Tell them to keep the presentation concrete. Suggest that props and demonstrations help.

Sometimes, as in the case of the builder, store owner, and ophthalmologist, a visit to their place of employment was an easy answer. The children liked seeing the equipment, tools, and machines. Other times suggesting props and handouts for a visit to the classroom will be better.

Young children learn by doing so the hands-on approach is best. The deli worker brought squares of cardboard, plastic wrap, rubber gloves, and stickers so children could wrap a slice of "cheese." The factory worker made self-locking bag ties and brought an assortment so children could make chains with them. The real estate agent



brought copies of listings showing pictures of houses for children to color. The biologist brought a microscope with slides of germs. The banker brought a chart; the truck driver brought his dump truck; and the farmer brought a calf!

Children are fascinated by work clothes and uniforms and these help grab their attention. The nurse, police officer, and band leader had this advantage. However, the deli worker wore her apron, gloves, and hair net with equal impact.

Youngsters love handouts. So far my children have received magnets, key chains, coloring books, snacks, and zippered bank bags! This provides the added advantage of advertising for the visiting parent.

After the presentation is over, make sure children show their appreciation. Have the class make a class card or poster and get each child to sign it. It is effective to have their design relate to the presentation (names on flowers for a greenhouse owner, pawprints for a veterinarian, etc.). Also thank the parent by name in your newsletter. These things will encourage other parents to give it a try.

Getting these visitors into your classroom will mean some extra work for you and changes in scheduling, but the dividends are worth it. The individual child whose parent comes gets a boost in pride and self-esteem because she knows her parent sees her schooling as important. The whole class gets exposed to a rich diversity of experiences. Parents feel that you value them and their input. (You can include parents who absolutely cannot come to class by designating a Show and Tell topic to be tools parents use in their work.) Parent involvement strengthens your program and this is a great way to do it.

SCHOOL HELPERS

by Mary Beth Spann Minucci

When helping children learn about community helpers, don't overlook the folks working right in your school building. Office staff, health care workers, school volunteers, custodial staff members, and other familiar faces in your school setting not only make valuable contributions to your school (and hence to your whole community). They are accessible helpers your children can meet and learn to appreciate in person. Here are some steps you can take to make the most of this powerful "real people" resource.

1 Begin by meeting with your class and helping them to understand the term "school helper" as anyone who helps children to and from school, works with children in school, or helps the building run smoothly.

2 Remind children that, just like at home where families work together doing housework, there are many jobs in the school building that must be done so that children can learn and play in a pleasant, safe place. Then help children brainstorm a list of school helpers; record these on a large sheet of chart paper.

3 Talk together about what these school helpers do on the job. Record these ideas on a separate piece of paper.

4 Work together to make a list of questions to ask the helpers, such as:

- *"What is the name of your job?"*
- *"How long have you been doing your job?"*
- *"What are some of the important things you do when you work?"*
- *"What are some of the tools you use on your job?"*
- *"Who helps you do your work?"*
- *"What do you like best about your job?"*

5 Contact each school helper on your list and arrange to have your children visit her worksite or office. To help prepare the helpers for the visit, print up your list of questions beforehand and give them to the person being interviewed.

6 Take your children to visit with and interview the school helpers. As the workers answer the questions, jot their responses in a notebook. Take along a camera and snap a picture of each helper on the job.

7 Back in class, compose a thank-you note to each helper you visit. Invite children to illustrate these notes.

8 Glue each helper's photo to a separate piece of oak tag (nine-by-twelve inches). Label each photo with the name of the person and the title of his job. Then have children dictate a description of what each helper does on the job to help in school. Refer to the interview questions for inspiration. (**TIP:** To keep interest high, quickly jot children's dictations into your notebook, then copy these onto mini-posters when children are busy with another activity.)

Ms. Johnson, School Secretary

Ms. Johnson greets everyone who comes in our school. She works on the computer. She answers the phone. She likes seeing the children come in each day.

9 Share and display the completed mini-posters in class, then assemble them into a class book entitled "Our School Helpers." At year's end, present each individual poster to the helper it honors.

UNIT ON COMMUNITY

WE ALL WORK TOGETHER

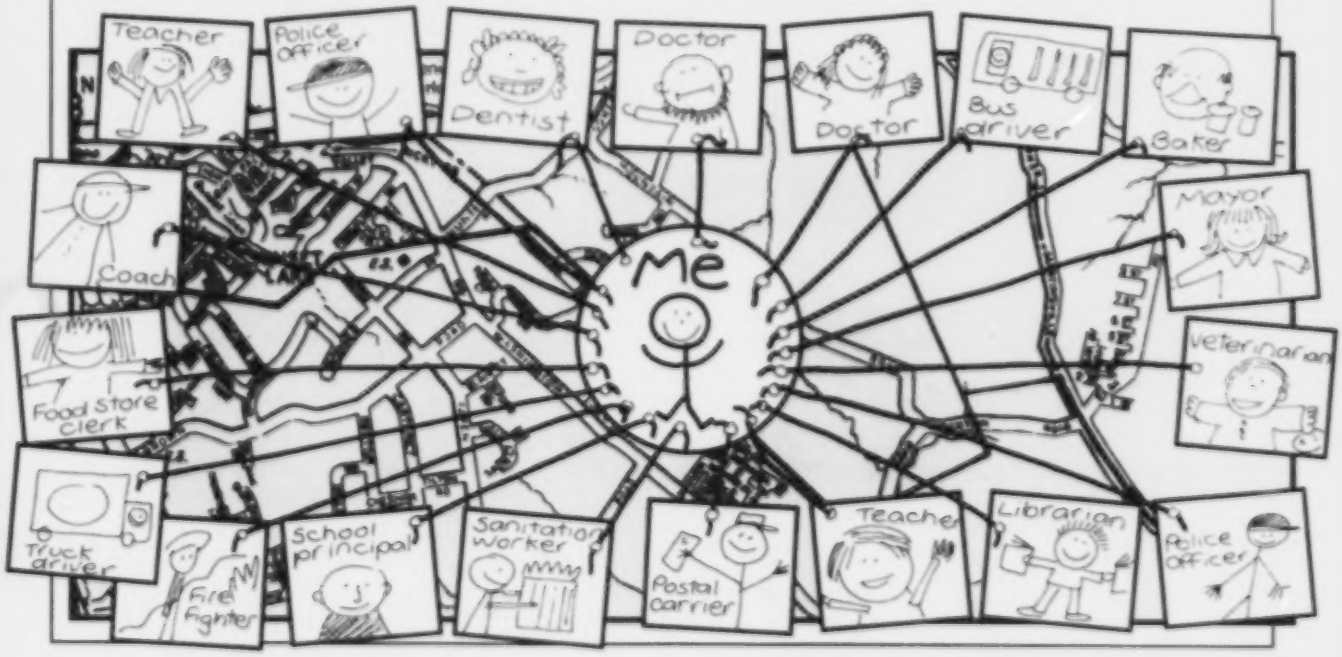
by Jeannine Perez

A riddle, a riddle!
Where do we find a place where the many separate parts are greater than the whole?
ANSWER: A community of people; any community from family child care center to villages and cities.

Invite your children to help you explore the webs of connections that bring together the parts of the different communities in which they live. Small villages, large cities, your classroom, and families are all communities. The first community most children recognize is their own family, which later expands to include their school. We can expand further on this concept to introduce the idea of larger and more complex communities until we finally become aware of the world community, in which every person plays an important part. You can teach this important concept with books and stories, songs, field trips, fingerplays, art, and drama.

Make a bulletin board

Make a bulletin board that will grow and change throughout the unit. The background is a large map of your community (created cooperatively by children). You could also use a city map enlarged to cover the board space. In the center of the map, draw a large circle with heavy black marker. In the center, place a figure labeled ME. Each day, have children draw pictures of workers in the community as they think of them, and mount these around the edges of the bulletin board for a colorful border. Attach a piece of string or yarn from ME to the picture of the community worker to symbolize the relationship between your children and the community. By the time your unit is over, you will discover so many different jobs and workers, that your bulletin board may have a triple layered border! When the bulletin board comes down, you can use part of the background map as a cover for a book, fill the pages with the drawn figures, and have children dictate stories about what you've done and learned. The bulletin board is a visual and interactive learning experience, and the book becomes a visual reminder of the exciting unit about your community, and your experiences exploring it.



Try on a New Hat

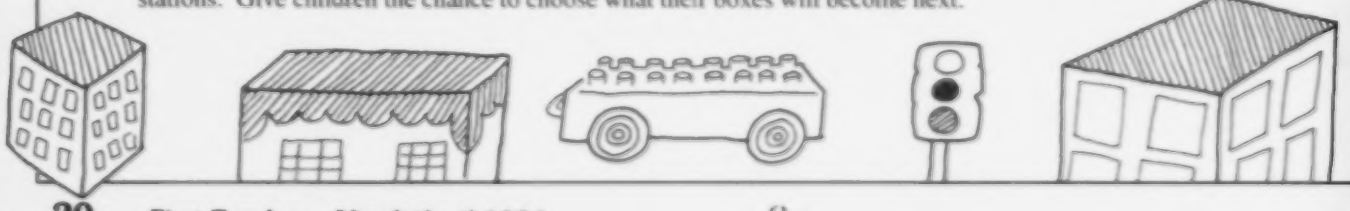
Borrow, buy, and ask for hat donations from families or businesses, or make hats that represent as many occupations as possible. Putting on a hat is like walking in someone else's shoes! For a few moments, at least, you become that person. You'll need lots of hats. Parents can make paper hats for you and find more at garage sales. If you can't find hats to represent all of the roles you think of, you might create some "invisible" hats for children to try on. This stretches their imaginations, and role-playing really soars.

Children also like to sing a silly little song to the tune of *"Old McDonald."* They can create longer and longer lists of community helpers for the second verse, sometimes pantomiming their actions. At the end of the unit, you could take all morning just to sing this song!

Try on a hat,
What will I be?
I can be anything
I want to be!
(Chant or sing to the tune... "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")
A hat upon my head I place,
E I E I OO
Warms my head, and shades my face,
E I E I OO
With a farmer here, a doctor there,
helpers, helpers, everywhere.
A hat upon my head I place
E I, E I, OO! (Add other helpers to subsequent verses.)
STOP
POLICE

Build Model Communities

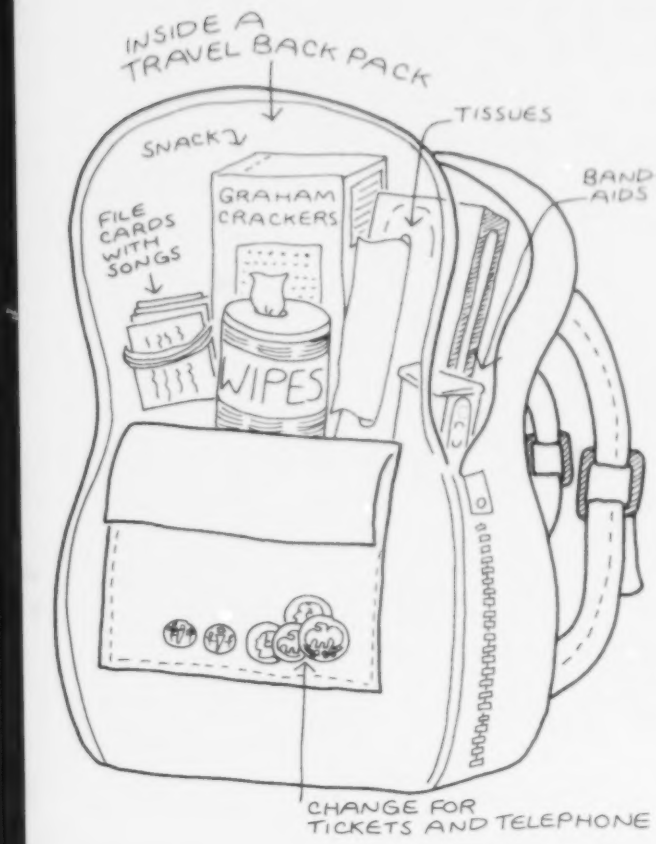
Use blocks, empty boxes (shoe boxes, gift boxes, even cereal boxes), or clay to make model communities that can be changed daily if desired. You can create a floor cloth from an opened and flattened appliance box or a few yards of artists' canvas, or even an old sheet. Simply paint on a few streets, one main street, perhaps an airport in the outskirts, or a few farms outside of town. Ask children to help you list all of the components needed for a working community. If you have room in your classroom, ask for as many appliance boxes (different sizes and shapes) as possible, and create a child-sized main street of shops, by cutting windows and doors, making signs, and decorating with paint. After a while, change the shops to become doctor's offices, libraries, hospitals, dentist's offices, police and fire stations. Give children the chance to choose what their boxes will become next.



Field Trips

Reading books about community helpers becomes meaningful when children have first hand experiences to go with what's read. Field trips provide those experience. The only limits on community field trips are the restrictions of distance and transportation. Explore the possibilities close to your center first and plan as many walking trips as possible.

Possible field trips might include: hospitals (some have special tours and programs to alleviate a child's anxiety about hospital stays), construction site, libraries (Ask about the possibility of scheduling a short story hour for your class.), doctor and dentist's offices, bakeries, grocery stores, greenhouses and nurseries, schools (High school classes often love to host/hostess a group of young children.), even factories that give tours. You might also look at recycling centers, nearby farms, art studios, and universities. After returning, write experience charts, stories, or poems, with lots of illustrations, and then collect and bind them into a classroom book.



Transportation and Communication

We quickly decided that people who work in transportation and communication jobs are vital to a healthy community. Field trips and visitors should also include the newspaper, telephone company, computer programer, taxi or bus driver, pilot, garage mechanic, etc. Visiting a radio or TV station would be exciting or an airport or train station. These occupations are also fun to role play your classroom.

If possible, take bus trips around your community with your class, or a one-way train trip to a nearby town. Have a picnic at the other end with parents who will bring you back.

Public transportation can be an adventure. Plan carefully and call ahead to be sure of schedules and prices. My class traveled all over the city free, and bus drivers were always thoughtful and helpful. It's essential to have enough adult helpers to quickly get children on and off, and also to have a backpack containing a book or two, emergency cards, Kleenex and Wet-Wipes, Band-Aids, finger-snacks, index cards with a few favorite songs or fingerplays and change for your ticket and for telephones. This emergency pack will prevent panic and chaos if a bus is late or you miss one, and have to improvise for 15-30 minutes with a class of pre-schoolers

A HANDS-ON BULLETIN BOARD: COMMUNITY HELPERS FROM A-Z

by Gail P. Jones

If you would like a great hands-on bulletin board that encourages independent play, try this idea using half a tissue box for each letter. Make each box a different color with construction paper and include a small picture of the community helper corresponding to each letter of the alphabet. On an eight-by-three-foot bulletin board, the boxes can be arranged in three rows with nine, eight, and nine boxes on the three rows,respectively. Have children put their name card in the box when they remove the contents. (There's never any doubt who is responsible for clean-up!)

At first you may need to discuss how materials are to be used and what other classroom materials may be used with the box contents. But, once it is understood, children should be able to use the bulletin board independently or with a partner. Be sure to add new items from time to time to maintain interest.

ctress/actor... Include masks of familiar character or necklaces for role-playing. Include small props such as a basket with artificial flowers if Little Red Riding Hood is the theme in the box.

aker... Include a baggie of play dough, cookie cutters, a small rolling pin, baker's hat, etc.

arpenter... Include a laminated paper tool belt with cardboard tools such as a saw, T- square, hammer, and possibly golf tees to use as nails on the pegboard back of a cabinet. On occasion, include instructions for fixing something specific in the room such as, *"The dollhouse needs repairs today."*

octor.... Include a doctor's kit with a white laminated doctor's headband, pencil and prescription pad. Set up a Medical Center "area" for the doctor, nurse, receptionist, etc.

ngineer (train)... Include hat, tickets, hole puncher, and flashlight. Add a train schedule and signs. Be sure to allow a space for setting up a "chair" train.

irefighter.... Include a firefighter hat, pretend hose, and cardboard hatchet. Include an area with toy fire engines, ladders, etc. for role-playing.

rocer... with cash register, coupons, pencils and stamps for marking prices on food, and play money.

airdresser.. with cardboard hair dryer, dolls, doll brush and comb, pretend shampoo and lotions.

llustrator..... Include sketch pads, stencils, and markers or crayons for illustrating stories created by children on tape or dictated.

eweler..... Include jewelry, boxes, and beads to make more jewelry.

itchen worker... Include salad bowl, tissue paper scraps for making salads; seasoning shakers, strainers, etc.

ibrarian... Include miniature books, small envelopes and cards for making book card pockets. Include date stampers and a stamp pad. Use removable masking tape for labeling books.

echanic.. Include cardboard oil can, screwdriver, wrench, gas and air hoses to use in the car and block areas.

urse.... Include a white cap and kit to assist the doctor. Include "pretend" medicine and bandages.

ptometrist.... Let children help make charts for "testing" letters, shapes, and colors.

olice officer... with ticket book, traffic light, and hat and gloves or **Postman supplies** like a bag with mail, stamps, and wrapping needs.

uilt maker...with wallpaper squares with holes punched all around, yarn, and plastic needles to make a quilt.

eceptionist, Ranger, or Reporter... with a pad for recording information, a microphone for TV reports, and a toy typewriter or computer.

ecretary... Include a toy typewriter, pencils, paper, toy telephone and appointment book.

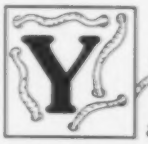
eacher... Include a small blackboard, chalk, storybook, paper, pencils, and stickers.

mbrella maker..... Include assorted-sized umbrella shapes and appropriate puzzle pieces that will fit on the forms for making umbrellas. Let children use construction paper or wall paper samples to create their own umbrellas.

eterinarian... Include pet care books, pretend cardboard clippers, food bowls, clipboard, and charts for caring for the "pets" (stuffed animals).

indow washer... Provide small spray bottles with paper towels and orders for washing windows.

ylophone player... Include a small xylophone and colored song cards to follow for playing simple songs. Let children create their own song cards for others to play.



arn maker... Include yarn, pieces of cardboard for wrapping yarn, spools, and looms for using yarn.

oo keeper... Include small berry baskets and tiny plastic zoo animals for sorting and arranging in a zoo.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE ARTS

by Margery A. Kranyik

It is time to add arts and entertainment to your community careers theme. Most communities are ripe with opportunities for young children to enjoy live performances and exhibits.

- All children are familiar with art projects. Introduce them to the world of fine arts. If your town has an art museum, find out what programs are available for young children. Many large city museums have ABC books on art work that may be on display in their permanent collections. Try and find the ABC series published by Harry N. Abrahms, Inc., *The Child's Play Museum* by Pam Adams (Child's Play) or *Museum Board Books* (Museum of Fine Arts Boston). Check your local high school and college art departments for a schedule of student exhibits. Arrange for an exhibiting local artist to visit your class and demonstrate her art medium before children view the exhibit.

As a culminating activity, have an art exhibit with the works of your children on display. Invite families, friends, and other classes. Offer light refreshments.

- Many local artisans have studios where they work. A visit to a leather crafter, stained glass designer, or other craftsperson may stimulate children's creativity in the classroom and promote special interests.

As a follow-up activity, have children draw, sculpt, make puppets, jewelry, paperweights, or other crafts projects that they can sell at a fund-raising craft show or flea market.

- Community dance groups may also be willing to visit your school to perform and demonstrate dance techniques. Your children may have siblings who are active in a local dance troupe that can help. At Open House, ask for parent help in locating talent. A dance teacher may be delighted to be a guest performer to inspire potential dancers.
- Contact community ethnic groups to locate musical performances commemorating various holidays or traditional art forms. Perhaps representatives can visit your class with ethnic costumes, music, and art forms.
- Encourage family participation. A questionnaire at the children's entrance to school can determine if family members participate in arts activities and are willing to share with the class.

Discuss in advance what children will see on their visits to artisans. Preview the site yourself to plan for safety precautions. Ask for family volunteers to assist.

Prior to your experience, have children discuss what they anticipate seeing. Make a chart based on child responses. Upon your return, review the charts, cross out what they did not see, and add anything new. Children also draw what they enjoyed from the trip—even if it was only the bus or van ride. Create a class book.

Be sure to have children send letters of thanks and appreciation to all those who made the trip a success. Children could add their own illustrations of what they enjoyed and remembered.

VISIT THE MAYOR

by Susan Rinas

Imagine the tiny footsteps of pre-schoolers echoing down the enormous corridors of city hall. What are they doing? With a simple approach, the young visitors are discovering an important person in their neighborhood, the mayor.

Who is the mayor? Tell children their mayor's name and how to pronounce it. They will be interested in personal information. For example: Is the mayor a parent or grandparent?

Show children a photo of their mayor. Does s/he look happy? What does a mayor wear to work? Then play the Mayoral Game with them.

Whether you live in a small town or a big city, make an appointment for your visit. When you call to schedule the visit, ask if you can use one or more of the following ideas.

- Have a snack with the mayor. Children can prepare cookies and bring them along.
- Bring a camera for keepsake photos of children with the mayor.
- Suggest that the mayor give "souvenirs" such as rulers or stickers with the city emblem or an autographed photo or map.
- Present the mayor with a gift such as the one described above.

Bring along parent chaperones for a successful trip. They can double as photographers, video takers, and snack servers. Perhaps a parent even knows the mayor! Consider some positive publicity too. Notify a local newspaper or TV station of your visit and invite them to cover it. Be certain to tell parents and the mayor about this. If your children cannot visit the mayor, invite the mayor to visit them instead.

Encourage children to learn more about their community. Post newspaper articles and photos that they bring in. Inform them of parades and ribbon-cutting ceremonies. Be sure to stay in touch with the mayor through cards and letters.

MAYORAL GIFT

You'll Need: bright colored felt squares ▲ glue ▲ 1 yard black felt ▲ fabric paint in any bright color ▲ a poster frame

What to Do:
Trace children's hands on felt squares and cut out. Cut black felt to fit frame and mount on cardboard back. Glue hand shapes to black felt. In bright colored fabric write: *"their future is in your hands."* Allow 48 hours to dry. Put in frame.

MAYORAL GAME

Explain to children that all the businesses want to build on the block. There is only room for five. A mayor must decide what the city needs most. Have children pretend to be mayor and choose five businesses. To make choosing easier, divide the list into groupings of three or four. There are no right or wrong choices. But remind children that the mayor's job is choosing what's needed most.

- ▲ video store
- ▲ grocery store
- ▲ gas station
- ▲ candy store
- ▲ movie theater
- ▲ pizza restaurant
- ▲ toy store
- ▲ donut shop
- ▲ flower shop
- ▲ bank
- ▲ furniture store
- ▲ book store
- ▲ pet store
- ▲ computer store

SAFETY FIRST!

by Barbara Fischer

Sometimes people need help, especially the youngest among us —the children. In a world constantly becoming more complex and distant, children's fears and sense of helplessness may increase. It is comforting for young children to know that there are people whose job is to help keep them safe. With your help, cautions become positive guidelines as children find ways to keep themselves safe.

Young children can learn basic safety guidelines by understanding what police, fire fighters, and weather forecasters do when they are working. Begin the process with a plan: read, discuss, and do.

POLICE

What can you do in an emergency? How do police officers keep us safe? Help children with answers to these questions by reading Gail Gibbon's *Emergency!* (Holiday House) at circle time. Show children how police vehicles rescue people, carry equipment and take sick people to the hospital. The police have helicopters, airplanes, and boats that are ready to go where needed.

With summer approaching, this might be a good time to talk about the "hug a tree" technique. Sometimes children may wander away from campsites (Discuss the need to stay close to adults when camping.) or become lost while on nature walks. What to do? Find a tree and stay in one spot while listening for someone calling your name. When you hear your name, call back loudly. But stay with your tree until adults see you.

Have fun while learning about traffic safety. Make tagboard traffic signs and attach these to traffic cones or sticks or tape them to a wall. Post these around your playground and let children take turns being traffic officers and car (bike) riders. Play the running game, Red Light, Green Light. When the leader says, "*Red light,*" all children stand still, when she says, "*Green light,*" children run until they hear, "*Red light.*"

FIRE FIGHTERS

Make a pretend campfire from blocks for you and children to sit around during circle time. Read Gail Gibbon's *Fire! Fire!* (HarperCollins) to show children the different kinds of equipment used to help fight fires on land and in the water. What action would children take if there were a fire at their house? Roll play "Stop, Drop, and Roll" as a way to stop fire burning their clothes. Remind them to stay low to the ground when they leave a burning house .

Let someone be the neighbor to whom the child reports the fire. Use your play phones for this activity. Do children have a planned fire escape route at home and a safe place to meet family members? Perhaps you

might send a note home suggesting this. Encourage children to dictate the note to you. Cut the letter in the shape of a fire hat and let children decorate their letters. As circle time ends, ask for ways to extinguish the "campfire." Repeat this process at the conclusion of several circle times to reinforce the importance of being sure a fire has been properly put out before leaving a site. Take part in practice fire drills to insure that children are familiar with your procedure at school.

Make your own fire trucks from half-gallon milk cartons. Paint them red. Add black paper circles for wheels and straws for hoses. Let the fire fighters wear headbands with a number in front as they keep others safe from fire.

WEATHER FORECASTING

Will you need a raincoat and boots today? Do you need to wear a jacket to keep warm for outside play? How can you find out? Read about the people who forecast the weather in Lynda De Witt's, *What Will the Weather Be?* During circle time, show children the ways people predict the weather.

Your children can be weather forecasters, too. Take a walk outside and look up. Do you see "feather" clouds way up high and a lot of sunshine? No rain likely today. But if you see dark clouds that hang low wrapping around the sky, better go inside as rain may be on the way.

Be a weather forecaster for a week. Each morning, write your prediction for that day on chart paper. At the end of the day, write the actual weather condition. By the end of the week, see how close you came to guessing what the weather would be. Could children tell what to wear or if they had to stay inside based on their observations?

When rainy weather comes your way, try making a rain gauge to see how much rain fell during the day. Use a plastic or glass container that has straight sides. Measure and draw the numbers one through five on the outside with markers. You might have to use masking tape instead of markers on glass containers. Decorate the container making sure the numbers can be read. Set the gauge outside to see how much rain it catches. Encourage families to watch the weather news together to see forecasters at work.

FIELD TRIPS

Plan a field trip to a police station and fire house to see equipment and how it works. Perhaps these helpers could come to your school. Children need to recognize police and fire fighters in uniform with face masks and equipment in place. Talking and interacting with them helps ease children's fears and may prevent children from hiding in an emergency.

While children need to know that adults work to keep them safe, they also can be aware of ways to keep themselves safe. Giving children knowledge gives them strength. How about a new slogan at your school? It might say, "*Safety first!*"

OUTDOOR OCCUPATIONS

by Susan G. Mills

Have you ever wondered why people do the jobs that they do? People who like to be outside, braving the weather, getting fresh air and exercise, and seeing the trees and blue sky, often choose to work out-of-doors. Go outside, look around, and you'll meet lots of people working.

We usually think of working outside in the country—jobs like farming, caring for animals, or cutting timber. You don't have to head for the woods to see people working outside.

In the city, many jobs are performed outside. The piles of trash that are put on curbs every day need to be picked up, sorted, and distributed to recycling centers and landfills. Many of the systems we depend on such as electric power, telephone lines, cable television, and water need people to keep them working properly. When a problem exists, someone is usually working to fix it. Meter readers walk around the streets each day checking meters so our water, gas, and electric bills are correct. Ask an electrician to visit your class and talk about her job.

Road maintenance crews keep the roads in good shape for us to drive our cars and ride our bicycles. Holes in the road are patched, streets are swept, snow is plowed, and new pavement is replaced when it gets worn out. If a road project is happening near your school, ask a worker to explain to your class what he is doing and why. It's fun to watch a project when you understand the reasons why it's being done.

City parks and recreation departments hire people to keep things looking nice. Lots of different jobs that we don't think about are done for us. Landscape architects plan where to plant different shrubs, flowers, and trees. Gardeners plant shrubs and flowers, grass is mowed, trash is picked up, and leaves are raked. Tree surgeons trim trees so they grow well and are safe. Swimming pools are maintained; snow is shoveled; and playground equipment is checked. Visit a park that has a person to take care of it.

Newspaper carriers keep us up to date on what's happening everywhere. Like mail carriers, they go out in all sorts of weather. Ask a mail carrier about his job. You'll be amazed at what kinds of things are happening outside every day!

Street vendors spend all day and part of the night standing outside selling wares—hot dogs, pretzels, newspapers and magazines, muffins, clothing, and many other products. What do they do when it's really hot—or really cold? Do they pack up and go home, or do they stay out to sell just one more thing? Stop and talk to someone who works on the street and find out these answers and more.

There are many more occupations that keep people outside. Look around your neighborhood, meet some exciting people, and discover some of the adventures they experience while working outdoors.

VISIT THE MILITARY

by Tania Kourempis-Cowling

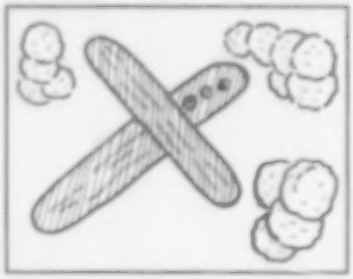
There are many holidays which we celebrate in the United States that honor people in the military. We see parades of soldiers, view movies of historic military events and see children role-playing their favorite trooper. Whether it's Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marines, they are all an important part of the Armed Forces and make an interesting topic for a field trip or classroom presentation.

Throughout the United States, there are military bases, most of which are open to the public for visits. Some even have museums where a tour guide will take your class on an educational field trip explaining and showing items used in military life. If one of these bases is not available in your area, call your local recruiting offices (telephone numbers are usually listed in your local directory) to arrange for a representative to come in and conduct a classroom field trip.

When children think *military*, they play with airplanes, boats, helicopters, tanks, uniforms, and medals. They march around the room carrying flags and singing patriotic songs. At the right, there are activities to enhance a field trip or just create a feeling of the military in your classroom.

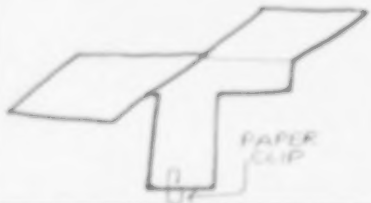
WOODEN GLIDER

Give each child two wooden tongue depressors. Paint these sticks with tempera paints. When dry, glue these (one on top of another) onto blue construction paper. With chalk, color in billowy clouds. You can even glue cotton onto the clouds for texture. Explain to children that glider airplanes float in the air without motors.



PAPER HELICOPTER

Instruct children to make paper helicopters and fly them outdoors or in the classroom. Follow the diagram given below. Time the helicopter's speed with a stopwatch to see how many seconds it takes to fall.



WALNUT BOAT

Use an empty walnut shell for the boat base. Fill it inside with a glob of modeling clay. Use construction paper to make colorful flags, gluing or taping these onto wooden toothpicks. Spear the stick of sails into the clay. Your boat is now complete, awaiting decorations made with paint, markers, stickers, etc. American Flag Stickers would be appropriate to attach onto the toothpick mast.

CARDBOARD SOLDIER

Take a cardboard toilet tube and paint it blue, green, white, or any color used by the military. When dry, use markers to draw in details and medals on the uniform. Don't forget a face! Cut pieces of construction paper to make a hat. Add pipe cleaner arms.

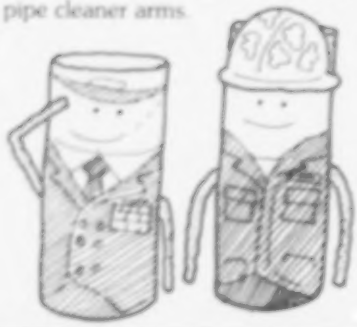


PHOTO FUN IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD

by Tom Crockett

Photographs can be a great way to personalize a lesson or discussion of people in a neighborhood. The following photo activities involve photographing people for classroom displays, games, and activities.

When photographing people keep in mind the following tips:

▶ Unless you need to show a uniform or style of dress, consider getting as close as possible to your subject. Head and shoulders portraits make effective use of picture space.

▶ Unless you need to show a specific location in the background, keep your background simple. Busy backgrounds can be distracting.

▶ If your subject is posed, try to get him smiling. Everyone looks better with a smile and young children respond more positively to smiling faces.

▶ If your subject is not going to be posed formally, give that person something to do. Keeping your subjects busy will make them less self-conscious.

PHOTO BULLETIN BOARD

As a group, talk about what kind of people, jobs, or businesses might be in a neighborhood. Make a list. Cover a bulletin board with paper and draw houses, businesses, and services. Make sure each building is big enough to cut an opening or door that is the size of the photograph you are going to use. Find and photograph a person for each building and mount that photograph behind the opening or door you have cut. This neighborhood can grow by adding pictures over time or adding new buildings. After children have had a chance to get used to the people pictures and where they go, try mixing them up and allowing children to put them back in the right place.

PEOPLE AND PLACES MATCH

Photograph a location and a person for each place. This might include the following: fire station/firefighter, school/teacher, crosswalk/crossing guard, barber shop/barber, bus/bus driver, and so on. Use these photos in a matching game to help children understand where to find different people in a neighborhood.

WHAT IF...?

Post photographs of different people with different jobs or roles in a community on a bulletin board. Make up a series of big cards with simple problems that a child might encounter. Let children take turns drawing cards and pointing to the picture of the person that could help them solve the problem. Some of the problems might include: If I was lost I would ask..., If I hurt myself I would need to find..., If I wanted to play I would want to find..., If I needed to cross the street safely I would look for...

PHOTO SAFARIS

If field trips are possible, consider using instant photography to document neighbors and neighborhoods. Instant photography gives children instant feedback and makes the people photographed feel important.

IN THE BOOK CORNER

TAKE A WALK WITH A BOOK

by Karel Kilimnik

Start at the beginning—your feet. What kind of shoes will you need to wear on a field trip?

What will you walk on? Dirt? Cement? Wood? Moss? Will it be an inside or outside trip? Books will help you find the answers.

Ann Morris continues her multicultural series of books with a new title *Shoes, Shoes, Shoes* (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard). This book follows a simple formula (proven successful in her other books)—lots of photographs of people wearing different kinds of shoes and accompanied by a few succinct words (*"old shoes, new shoes, just-right-for-you shoes"*). At the end of the book, she provides a description of each picture listing the country and the function of the shoes pictured. A world map shows the location of each country.

If your field trip is in the city, *C Is for City* is your book (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard). Nikki Grimes and Pat Cummings team up to create this wonderfully rich ABC book of city street scenes. Cummings' illustrations flesh out the text as in the H selection: *"H is for handball, for hopscotch and hot dogs, for Hasidim in black hats with curly dark hair."*

The illustration overflows with H words besides the ones in the text. A little girl holds a hoola-hoop, a man wears a hard hat as he hammers, the fire hydrant graces the corner and a boy wears headphones.

A field trip can be a walk in your community. Sheila Hamanka reaches back into her childhood during the 1950's to give us *Be Bop A Do Walk!* (Simon & Schuster).

Sheila remembers her excitement the day she and her best friend Martha accompanied Sheila's father on a long walk in New York City to Central Park. Her neighborhood on the Lower East Side was a multicultural mosaic. Sheila, Japanese, and Martha, African-American, wave goodbye to neighbors Mrs. Schartz, Mr. Murillo, and Linda Chin as they set out on their adventure.

The girls stride purposefully leaving personal marks on different landmarks. They leave nose prints on the Italian bakery window, ride horses on the carousel in Central Park, and leave a trail of paper boats made by Sheila's father floating on the pond in Central Park.

Changes by Marjorie N. Allen and Shelley Rotner (Alladin Paperbacks) made me think of planning field trips to one place over the course of a year to note the changes. This photographic essay documents the changes in a daffodil as it slowly unfolds into a buttery-yellow flower and a maple tree as it gains new growth, slowly sheds its leaves, and finally all that remains is a trunk with protruding branches. it tells the story of bird eggs that change to fuzzy baby birds who finally are old enough to fly off into the sky.

Find a corner of your neighborhood to monitor and return to check on the changes. Take along a camera and note pad (maybe even a tape recorder) and you are all set to produce your own record of changes.

If your field trip is to a parent's workplace, check out *Mommy's Office* by Barbara Shook Hazen (Atheneum). Hazen has a wonderful way of comparing Mommy's office to her young daughter's "office" (preschool program) in ways that are understandable to young children.

The two do parallel work in the morning. Mom works at her desk and her daughter works with crayons and paper on a low table at her "paperwork." Mom's afternoon presentation is like Show and Tell.

This book provides a way to talk about parents who work in offices and what to expect (in general) on a field trip. On the other side, it provides some interesting ways for parents to incorporate their young child into a regular work day.

STILL IN THE

FROM PILOTS TO POTTERS...

by Paula Gaj Sitarz

Meet several authors who introduce children to a variety of careers and occupations in picture books and photo-essays.

❙ Gail Gibbons combines full-color, interesting, uncluttered illustrations of appeal to young children with clear, fascinating, well organized texts. She gives youngsters a brief yet satisfying, look at a variety of occupations.

❙ In *Deadline! From News to Newspaper* (Thomas Y. Crowell) Gibbons shows children what reporters, photographers, editors, artists, and printers do to produce a daily newspaper.

❙ Children can learn what happens in a *Department Store* (Thomas Y. Crowell). They will be introduced to the people who work in the store and see what they do. Gibbons includes sales people, department managers, people who work in the stock-room, credit department and customer service, buyers and display artists.

❙ Gibbons introduces children to farming and farmers by relating what happens inside and outside the farm buildings season by season in *Farming* (Holiday House). Children learn the many tasks farmers do and the skills they need. Gibbons also explains the different kinds of farming from dairy to cattle.

❙ In *Fill It Up!: All About Service Stations* (Thomas Y. Crowell), author Gibbons draws children into a busy day at a service station owned by John and Peggy. In an entertaining way, children develop a good understanding of the work and skills needed by people who work in service stations. They'll see what a mechanic does and what the attendants do. They learn about the skills needed to run the service station office from ordering new supplies to mailing bills to customers.

❙ Youngsters will learn about the many careers available in the construction industry and see what these people do in *How a House Is Built* (Holiday House). Some of the mystery is taken out of what these people do: general contractor, surveyor, heavy equipment operators, foundation builders, carpenters, plumbers, masons, electricians, painters, and landscapers.

❙ By following a piece of mail from mailbox to arrival at its destination in *The Post Office Book: Mail and How It Moves* (Thomas Y. Crowell), Gibbons introduces youngsters to the many people who work in a post office and to their duties. Children will meet letter carriers and the many behind-the-scenes postal workers.

❙ Invite children to follow a day in the life of a potter in *The Pottery Place* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) and they'll be fascinated and come to appreciate the skill and creativity necessary to be a potter.

❙ Susan Kuklin meshes clear, understandable text with varied full-color photographs in her books that introduce children to occupations. In *Going to My Nursery School* (Bradbury Press) children will get a clear sense of what a nursery school teacher does and the qualities she needs through following a young boy named Heath during a day at nursery school.

❙ Share *Taking My Cat to the Vet* (Bradbury Press) and *Taking My Dog to the Vet*. By following children and their pets, young listeners will see what a veterinarian does and learn what abilities, skills, and knowledge they need.

❙ *In When I See My Dentist* (Bradbury Press) children are invited to see four-year-old Erica have a dental visit. Again, through the eyes of a child, youngsters will see what a dentist does, what types of instruments she must use and the knowledge she needs. Children will also see what a dental assistant does.

❙ In the same manner, Kuklin shows children what a doctor does in *When I See My Doctor* (Bradbury Press). Four-year-old Thomas is very appealing and

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following his exam allows young children to see what doctor and nurses do. In *Fighting Fires* (Bradbury Press) Kuklin shows what fire fighters, male and female do, how they put out fires, rescue people trapped in cars, and practice saving each other. Youngsters will see what fire fighters wear and learn more about the different jobs that fire fighters do.

❙ A perfect series to share with young children is the "Discovery Library of Careers" (The Rourke Press). Each of the books is written by William Russell. In the books *Broadcasters*, *Farmers*, *Fishermen*, *Pilots*, *Truckers* and *Zookeepers*, the format is the same. A full-page, color photograph on one page is balanced by a page of concise information that covers one facet of the topic in an interesting way. In each book, children will learn what the career is, what the individual does, where he works, what type of person enjoys this career, and the skills and education needed to pursue the career.

❙ Watch for a new series by The Rourke Press, "People Who Care For Our Health" which includes the books, *Dentists*, *Dieticians*, *Doctors*, *Nurses*, *Pharmacists*, and *Physical Therapists*. Each of these books is written by R. James.

❙ Be sure to share *A Day in the Life of a Police Officer* (Scholastic) by Eric Arnold with children. Written in 1994, it includes full-color contemporary photographs showing Kathy Murphy, a police officer in Cambridge, MA in her personal and professional life. The text is fascinating and gives a perfect, well-rounded look at the real life of a police officer.

❙ Children will see officer Murphy at roll call, riding with her partner in her cruiser, patroling neighbors, talking to people, responding to a report of a stolen bike and investigating a case of a rabid raccoon. Officer Murphy is seen interacting with her family, too.

❙ In *My Hometown Library* (Houghton Mifflin), William Jaspersohn takes children to the Guilford Free Library in Guilford, CT. Through full-color photographs and straightforward text, Jaspersohn introduces children to the library director, librarians, library assistants, and volunteers. Youngsters will see these individuals engaged in their jobs. They will also meet people who work in the technical services area and see what type of work they do.

STILL IN THE

FROM CHEFS TO MECHANICS...

by Sandra L. Malcolm

In this issue, we will be visiting some of the people in our neighborhoods that work to help others. I have chosen some unusual occupations to help children realize that all jobs are important and necessary.

CITY SOUNDS

by Craig Brown (Greenwillow Books) introduces us to Farmer Brown as he travels to the city. He is surrounded by the many sounds created by the workers as they carry out their jobs.

BEFORE READING, tape sounds normally heard in and around a city/town such as a fire siren, honking horns, and a church chime. Share the tape with children to begin a discussion of sounds. Make a list of sounds suggested by children and who/what makes each sound.

AFTER READING, ask children to think about the sounds Farmer Brown heard as he travelled in the city. Who/what made each sound? Discuss the jobs connected with each sound and the importance of each job. Ask questions such as: *"What words did the author use to help us hear the sounds?" "What other words are sound words?"* Make a list of sound words that children suggest.

ACTIVITIES

- Replay the sound tape. Are any new sounds identified that were missed before?
- Provide blank tapes and a recorder for children to create their own sound tapes.
- Using other sound words, encourage children to draw, color, or paint pictures to accompany the words.
- Take a walk or a field trip to places in your city or town where some of the sounds can be heard. Discuss the workers and their jobs who are making the various sounds.

A CHEF

by Douglas Florian is part of the How We Work Series (Greenwillow Books). The book introduces the responsibilities, tools used, and materials necessary for being a chef.

BEFORE READING, pass around a tray of finger foods for each child to sample. Ask who in your neighborhood would prepare food for others. Write down all responses. Discuss going to a restaurant to eat. Ask children, *"Who prepares the food the waiter serves?"* Show the cover of the book. Discuss what is taking place in the picture.

AFTER READING, ask children questions such as, *"Where are some of the places a chef works?" "What is the difference between your mom or dad cooking dinner for your family and a 'chef'?" "Who are all the people that work with the chef?"* Find out what other jobs children think that the chef does besides prepare food. Do children think he does those jobs himself? Ask children how they think the chef learns to cook different kinds of foods.

ACTIVITIES

- Bring in spices (those discussed in the story as well as others) for children to smell and see.
- Plan a day of cooking soup and/or baking pastries. Have recipe cards available for the 'chefs' to follow.
- Arrange a field trip to a restaurant kitchen to talk with the chef and to see the large kettles, utensils, and ovens necessary for cooking for many people.

AN AUTO MECHANIC

by Douglas Florian is also part of the How We Work Series (Greenwillow Books). Its simple text and colorful illustrations are used to depict the daily life of an auto mechanic.

BEFORE READING, have some tools and auto parts available that will be mentioned in the story. Encourage children to look at, talk about, and explore the tools and parts. Ask children who would use these in their daily work. Discuss the answers. You might invite an auto mechanic to visit the classroom to read the story.

AFTER READING, ask children if this was a true or make-believe story. In the story, the auto mechanic was a man. Do children believe that a woman can be an auto mechanic? Why or why not? Have children think about all the tools the auto mechanic was using. Ask children, *"How do you think he learned to use them all to fix cars?" "How does a computer help an auto mechanic?" "What would happen if we didn't have any auto mechanics in our town?" "Is this an important person to have in our town?" "Why or why not?"*

ACTIVITIES

- Make the tools (plastic) and supplies used by the auto mechanic available during play. Include writing materials for children to order supplies or write bills.
- Take a field trip to an auto center. Take along a camera along so children can photograph what they see.
- Using the photos from the field trip, write a class book about the auto mechanic.
- Encourage children to draw pictures and dictate sentences about their trip to send to the auto center.
- Think about the question, *"What would happen if we didn't have an auto mechanic in our town?"* Encourage children to make pictures and text for a class book, "Our Town Has No Auto Mechanic."

STOP THAT GARBAGE TRUCK

by Linda Glasser (Albert Whitman and Company) introduces us to Henry, who listens and waits for the garbage truck to roll down his street. One week he discovers his family has not put their garbage out but Henry stops the truck just in time.

BEFORE READING, have children generate a list of jobs people do in their town. Write these on chart paper. If garbage collection was not mentioned, ask children about this job and what they know about it. Show the front and back cover of the book as a single picture. Have children discuss what they see. Tell children the title of the book. Ask children what they think the title tells us about the story.

AFTER READING, ask children how Henry helped his family. *"What would have happened if the garbage collectors had missed Henry's garbage?" "What do you think happens to the garbage when it is dumped from the can into the truck?" "Where does the garbage go from the truck?" "What would happen if we didn't have garbage collectors?" "How could we make less garbage to be picked up and dumped into a land fill?"*

ACTIVITIES

- Provide play props in the classroom to encourage "garbage collection" play. Light weight plastic buckets could be used as garbage cans.
- Arrange to watch a local garbage collection in your school's neighborhood if possible.
- Arrange to photograph the garbage collection of your town from the pickup to the dumping. Develop and enlarge the photos. Discuss what is happening in the pictures.
- Encourage children to write text to accompany the photographs.
- Make a tape of garbage collection sounds. Create a class song about garbage collection.

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PreK- Grade 2

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by Lisa Lyons Durkin and Deborah E. Dixler
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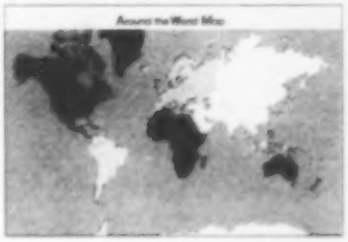

1. The colorful **World Map** poster is wordless, making it adaptable to individual classroom needs and interests. Children can identify their countries of origin or their ancestral homes, connect the different languages listed on the **Greetings** poster to countries in which those greetings are used, or simply begin to understand how big the world is.

2. The **Greetings** poster presents fourteen different ways people around the world greet each other using a variety of languages and alphabets

3. The **Around the World from A to Z** poster features 26 items from cultures all over the world. Some of these items may be very familiar to children; others may be completely new and fascinating. The items tie into age-appropriate content areas and will act as springboards to further multicultural explorations.

4. The **I'm Special** poster features photographs of children of a variety of ethic backgrounds engaged in classroom activities, some with the items shown in the **A to Z** poster. The empty frame in the middle is reserved for one child at a time to put up a collage of pictures of interests, family, and activities that display her or his own uniqueness and personality.

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- Explore the Arts—Outdoors
- Creative Ways to Experience the Wind
- Sing a Rainbow
- Learning about Flower Power
- Creative Questions Promote Creative Thinking
- 12 Fun Spring Recipes
- Field Trips with Imagination
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CREATIVITY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

by Barbara F. Backer

Children have opportunities for developing creative thinking throughout the day in the enriched environment of a preschool classroom. Encourage your children to question and to experiment in all curriculum areas, then watch their thinking power grow.

▶ **Science** Put out a dishpan of cool water. Have children brainstorm ways to make the water warmer. Try out any safe methods to see if they work.

▶ **Math** Give children a large container of pattern blocks. How many different combinations of three (or any appropriate number) blocks can they make to represent the number three? Examples: one triangle, one diamond, and one trapezoid; two diamonds and one hexagon; three hexagons; three trapezoids. Older children enjoy tracing the blocks to record their solutions.

▶ **Language/Music and Movement** Sing "Little Bo Peep." Let children choose to be Bo Peep (you can have more than one) or the sheep and have them act out the song as they sing. Then, in turn, have each child name something else Bo Peep lost. Have children act out the suggestions as they sing the song. Children may give answers that aren't animal names. Accept all ideas. Ask children how that item would move and what it would be wagging (or dragging) behind. For example:

Little Bo Peep has lost her cat
And can't tell where to find it.
Leave it alone and it will come home
With its kittens meowing behind it.

▶ **Circle Time** Show children three equilateral triangles of the same size. Tell them that these are part of a picture. What could the picture be, and what part of that picture might the triangles represent? For example, the triangles might be the ears and nose of a cat or even the petals of a flower.

▶ **Art** Follow up the last activity with a related art project. Give each child three one-inch triangles, a piece of art paper, glue, and markers or crayons. Challenge children to make a picture using the triangles as part of the composition. They could use markers to add the missing parts. Have children tell you about their creations. Write their words on their papers, if they desire. Compare results so children see other approaches to the solution.

During the year, repeat the activity several times to provide opportunities for new thinking. Repeat the activity using other shapes or combinations of shapes, also.

▶ **Snack** For a creative snack, have children mix peanut butter with cracker crumbs and a bit of honey, then roll the mixture into balls. Let children press in raisins, pretzels, and donut-shaped cereal pieces to create critters.

▶ **Dramatic Play** Keep a box filled with throw-aways such as cardboard tubes, empty plastic bottles, margarine tubs, junk mail, used postage stamps, greeting cards, packing materials, and more. Encourage children to use these materials as props for creative play. Cardboard tubes become telescopes, swords, and animal horns. The mail carrier uses postages stamps and junk mail envelopes as part of her play. An artist might cut shapes from greeting cards to use in making a quilt pattern. Shredded paper packing material becomes grass or hay in a block construction.

Be open to children's questions and ideas. They will lead you to other activities that promote creative thinking.

CREATIVE COGNITION: THINK SPRING!

by Susan Entz

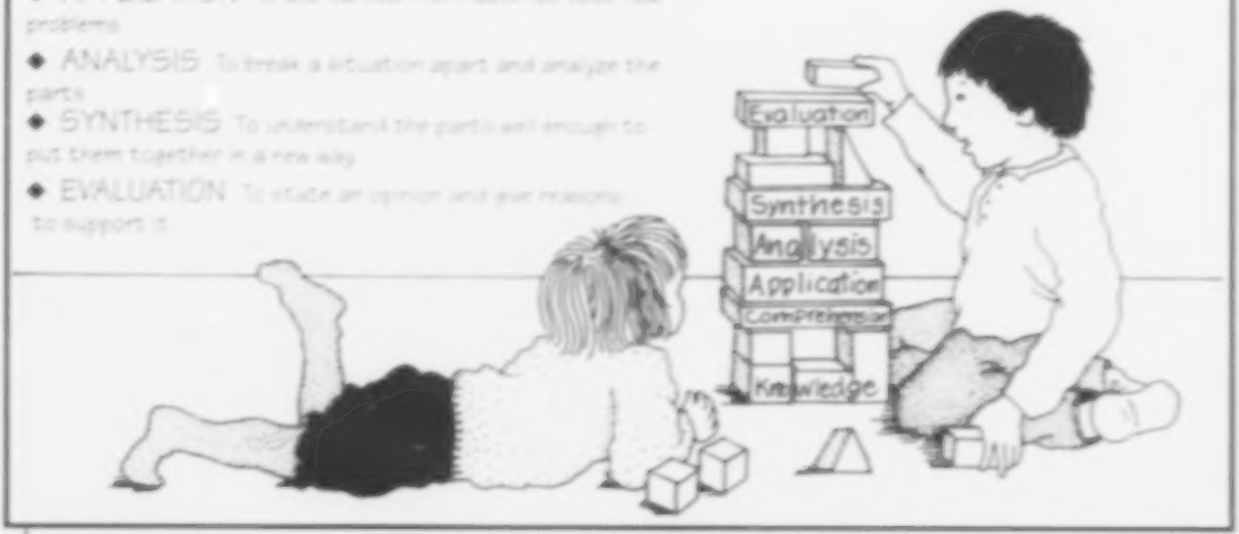
Images of art, music, poetry, or dance usually come to mind when *creativity* is discussed. But the creative process has as much to do with thinking as it does with artistic expression. Creative thinking occurs when a child comes up with an unexpected answer, a novel solution, or considers what might happen in the near future.

Teachers encourage creative thought by the careful selection of questions. In the *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, Benjamin S. Bloom suggested that thinking actually occurs on several levels. (See the box below.)

Infant and toddler learning occurs primarily at the first two levels. By age three, most children begin to use all six levels. But teachers often continue to restrict their questions to the *who, what, where,* and *when* questions from the first two levels. Think carefully about your questioning techniques and provide opportunities for children to think on all levels. You can jot down sample questions on your lesson plans, or make springtime theme posters to remind you of questions that help children practice each level of thinking. Post these around the room to remind all of the adults in the program to ask many kinds of questions throughout the day. Think spring!

THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THINKING

- KNOWLEDGE To learn the basic facts and information well enough to answer simple questions.
- COMPREHENSION To understand information well enough to explain it in one's own words.
- APPLICATION To use learned information to solve new problems.
- ANALYSIS To break a situation apart and analyze the parts.
- SYNTHESIS To understand the parts well enough to put them together in a new way.
- EVALUATION To state an opinion and give reasons to support it.



THOUGHTS ON A WIGGLY WORM

When planning a springtime activity, take a moment to jot down questions that you might ask when the opportunity arises. For example, if children notice several earthworms on the sidewalk after a rain, you might ask the following questions:

- *What's the name of this animal?* (Knowledge)
- *Carefully pick it up. Touch the skin. How does it feel?* (Knowledge)
- *Where does it live?* (Comprehension)
- *How much does a worm eat everyday?* (It eats its own weight everyday.) (Comprehension)
- *Does this animal have bones?* (Comprehension)
- *Do boys and girls have bones?* (Application)
- *Get down on the ground and show us how a worm moves.* (Application)
- *Think of places you might find worms.* (Application)
- *Look carefully. Does a worm have eyes?* (Knowledge)
- *How do you think the worm finds its way around without eyes?* (Analysis)
- *Why would that be useful if you lived underground?* (Synthesis)
- *How are worms and snakes alike?* (Analysis)
- *Why are worms called "nature's recyclers"?* (They turn decaying plants, dead insects, and animal manure into rich soil nutrients.) (Analysis)
- *Why did the worms have to crawl out of their tunnels when it rained hard today?* (Analysis)
- *Use the play dough to create some earthworms.* (Synthesis)
- *We have a lot of food scraps left over from lunch. Farmers think that earthworms are very good "recyclers." Let's make our own worm farm to see if they will eat our leftovers.* (Synthesis)
- *Do you think that earthworms are useful creatures? Why or why not?* (Evaluation)
- *Do you like worms? Why or why not?* (Evaluation)
- *Would you like to learn more about worms? Why?* (Evaluation)
- *Pretend you own a worm farm. Make posters to sell your big, juicy, wiggly worms.* (Synthesis)

WIGGLY WORM SPONGE AND STRING PAINTING

What You'll Need: any heavy duty paper ▲ black and brown tempera paint in pie pans ▲ small sections of sponge ▲ paper toweling ▲ string or yarn, cut in lengths of 18 to 24 inches

What to Do:

1. Make two pads of paper toweling and soak one with brown paint and the other with black paint.
2. Have children press the sponge into the brown paint and print brown "soil" on the paper.
3. Let children press string "worms" into the black paint pail so they are saturated with paint.
4. Place the wet string on one half of the paper leaving a trail of string hanging out.
5. Fold the paper over the string and then pull the string out. Repeat. This process creates interesting worm tunnels.
6. When dry, have children add a worm drawing.

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SKILLFUL THINKING

by Gail P. Jones

When you provide opportunities to develop divergent thinking skills, "creativity" will bloom in your classroom.

But what are *divergent thinking skills*? Here are some examples along with specific activities to develop them.

FLUENCY—an abundance of ideas

Activities might include a "Spider Web" that encourages "ongoing" contributions and brainstorming. Draw a posterboard-sized web, placing magnetic tape at the crossing lines. Give children a concept (for example: *brown, spring, rain*) to brainstorm with one-word ideas. Let the spider hold the word in one corner of the web. Write the ideas generated by the children on pieces of paper with paper clips attached. Place each paper clip onto a piece of manetic tape. Use the ideas for creating "instant poetry," arts and crafts, stories, dramatics, and songs!

FLEXIBILITY—seeing and doing things in many ways

Challenge children to look at the classroom from a bird's view point! Can they draw pictures of themselves from different angles?

Use a camera and take pictures of the same object from a variety of viewpoints. Place the pictures near the art center for challenging projects!

ORIGINALITY—the ability to think of unique and different ideas

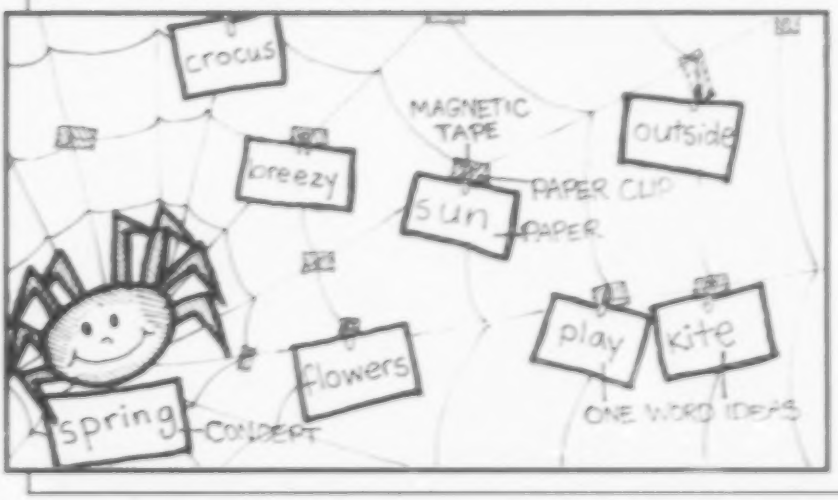
Always praise the uniqueness of an idea! (Too often ideas are stifled or not allowed!) Encourage children to contribute their "own" thoughts and ideas. Perhaps, you could create a special poster/area for recognizing unique solutions to classroom problems or "inventions" children make! Spring is a fun time for "cloud watching" and creating art projects showing their ideas.

ELABORATION—expanding the information about something and its attributes

Whatever topic children discuss, say, "*Tell me one more thing about that,*" challenging them to think of more ideas. If they have a problem, ask more specific questions such as, *"How big is it?" "How does it feel?" "What colors do you see?"* Once you get them started, children will ask each other questions!

RISK TAKING—trying new things

Teachers are often reluctant risk takers themselves for fear of failure or letting children see that they do not know how to do something. Be a good role model as a risk taker, showing children that it is okay not to know everything, or to make a mistake! Recognize that some "overly enthusiastic" actions are often a form of risk taking and shouldn't be stifled to the point of destroying creative thinking!



COMPLEXITY—the ability to see a problem and to find solutions to it

"Plant" some problems from time to time that challenge children to solve them if you don't have enough "real" ones! Challenge children to improvise the supplies needed for a project. Suppose they want to build a weather station...what do they need? What can they use and how will it work? Remember that your answers can close doors to children's creativity. Give them time to use their thinking and problem solving skills!

CURIOSITY—the desire to see and learn more about something

This natural trait of children is easy to satisfy by providing the topic or object and giving children "time" to be curious! Then put on your listening ears and step back. Enjoy their curiosity developing!

IMAGINATION—using stories, songs, art, movement, and thoughts in fantasy

Ask open-ended questions and accept all ideas as unique and special! Let children pretend to be the bumble bee in a child-sized hive. Or, perhaps they can tell a story on tape and draw pictures for *"The Day I Was a Robin."*

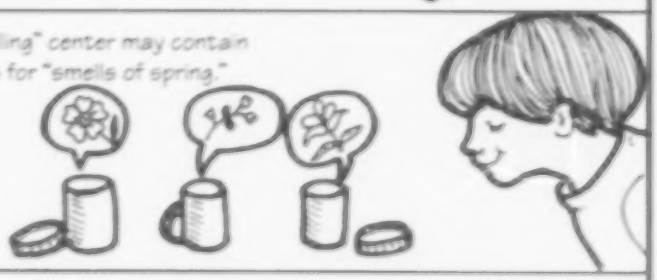
SPRING DISCOVERY CENTERS

Centers throughout the classroom may include nature and science activities. Set up the science area with equipment and supplies that are readily available. One method of handling the equipment is by providing small suitcases, boxes, trays, or containers with equipment to help children use their own "tools of discovery"—their senses. This works for all seasons and units.

☛ The "sight" container might include such things as binoculars, magnifying glasses, reference books, etc. Cut out and laminate cameras with different-shaped holes for discovering objects. Let children pretend to take pictures of things that are each shape.

☛ The "hearing" container might include tapes and a tape player for hearing sounds of spring and recording information.

☛ The "smelling" center may contain film canisters for "smells of spring."



☛ The "touching" center may have egg cartons for collections and soil, sand, gravel, moss, water, etc. for planting activities.

☛ Tasting can be fun. Have a seasonal fruit or vegetable available each day for special tastes of spring.

TODDLER TIME

MAKING CHOICES

by Jeannine Perez

Making choices and solving problems is an important part of developing creativity. As a teacher, you already help children learn to make wide choices everyday, and probably do so naturally. *"Do you want to use the red paper or the blue paper to make your picture?" "Would you like a square cracker or a round one?"* These simple choices are both good practice and learning experiences.

From infancy on, children work daily to make choices and solve problems. It is a tragedy when that natural talent is stifled. Children demonstrate their strengths in problem solving when you observe these characteristics.

- They enjoy the challenge and steps of problem-solving.
- They have a number of diverse skills (and are excited about learning even more new skills).
- They are persistent and do not give up easily.
- They are confident and have experienced enough successes to be willing to risk an occasional failure.

Try to include many single and group decisions each day: *"Shall we read Frog and Toad*

WE CAN HELP CHILDREN LEARN TO BE BETTER PROBLEM-SOLVERS BY:

- asking open-ended questions.
- focusing on language development and vocabulary for clear communication.
- extending the wait time for answers and solutions.
- exposing children to problematic activities (for example: make real life maps of different ways to get to school).
- encouraging partner activities (cooperative activities).
- honoring the choices children make and treating them with respect and fairness.
- asking different children how they solved problems (showing that there are many ways to solve problems).
- expressing your interest in children's problem-solving process.
- using dramatization activities as a kind of practice for real life situations.
- using visualization. Ask children to close their eyes and see with their mind's eyes.
- creating your own problems in group time, then solving them together with children.
- letting children draw many pictures (each drawing is an exercise in problem solving).
- letting children guess, then check their guesses with you.
- helping children gather information through a wealth of experiences.
- giving children the freedom to explore possibilities.
- avoiding imposing adult viewpoints or patterns on children's ideas or choices.

or The Gunniwolf at group time?" "Would all of you like to suggest ideas that will help me plan next week's afternoon snacks?" Sometimes choices are limited or directed: *"Would you like to build with blocks before or after snack?" "You may go outside when the toys are put away."* Include as many of these simple choices as possible in each day's routine. Making them requires thinking, comparing outcomes and consequences, seeing connections, and problem solving. Every choice made independently empowers a child.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Plan activities that can be done in different ways.

- Make instant pudding together in a shaker. Have a variety of chopped fruit and raisin toppings. Allow each child to create a culinary masterpiece for snack. You could also offer choices with a variety of ice cream toppings, sandwich fixings, or make cupcakes or cookies and supply different colored icings and decorations.
- Ask children to help you rearrange a part of the room. Ask their opinion before changing the decorations on the bulletin board or the location of an interest center.
- Sing simple repetitive songs that give choices of words or actions. Even basic ones such as the one below, give children a chance to make choices, expand vocabulary, lead others, and have fun!
- "Do as I Do" (Tune: "Are You Sleeping")

Do as I do.
Do as I do.
Follow me.
Follow me.
(Child chooses motion or activity)
Skip around the room,
Skip around the room,
(Activity of child's choosing)
One, two, three.
One, two, three.

- Dress-up corners and dramatic play are also ways to practice for real life. Enter into children's housekeeping or role plays. *"Hello. I'm Mrs. Perez, your new neighbor. Would you like to come to my house for tea tomorrow? What is your favorite dessert?" "It is time to go to the grocery store. Can you think of what foods we need to buy?" "Shall we buy a new red car or a pick-up truck?"*
- If you've ever watched a child choose a candy from a plate, put it in her mouth, then replace it and pick up another, you realize that it is also hard to stick to some decisions. Allowing a short time each day for chosen activities can help children choose and then carry through on decisions.

Planning for a fifteen-minute CHOICE TIME activity after morning snack works well. Let children choose cards (tickets to different centers), or simply make verbal choices. Whatever area is chosen (games, blocks, art, dress up, etc.) is the area played in for fifteen minutes (no matter how appealing another area seems).

- Provide children in your class with a wealth of materials to use in art projects. Encourage them to make decisions and choices whenever possible.

Give children varied experiences in the classroom, outside, and on field trips. Keep parents informed about the activities and choices you provide in your class. Each time a child in your classroom makes a simple or complex choice, it is more practice for a lifetime of choice-making!

ALL ABOUT GRASS

by Susan G. Mills

This spring, do something wild and different with your class! Head outside and explore the grass. You'll be amazed at all the things you can learn right in your school yard.

Step out the door and find a spot of lawn. Can you find a grass plant? Pull one up. Just one. Go ahead, it's not an endangered species. Talk about what it looks like. Look at the parts of the plant. It has a stem, leaves, roots, and a flowering structure. Is it like most flowers that we see? What is different about these flowers? What do the leaves look like? Look at the way they are attached to the stem. The leaves are two ranked, which is common to all grass species. See the roots—they spread out from the plant to stabilize it. Grass grows near the bottom of the plant, so mowing doesn't kill it.

Can you think of other plants that look like grass? Many plants have the same structure such as corn or wheat.

Grasses are found all over the world. There are more than 600 families, and 7,500 species. Grasses grow in the ocean, marshes, deserts, the Arctic, and above the timberline.

Grasses are the major producer of food on this planet. In all cultures, people depend on grass to survive. Maize (corn), rice, and wheat are grasses. The seeds from these grasses are called grain. Grain is rich in protein, carbohydrates, and oils. People eat cereal grasses such as corn, rice, wheat, oats, barley, sorghum, rye, and millet. Sugar cane is a grass plant that can be eaten.

Grass has many uses besides being harvested for humans to eat. Livestock all over the world depend on it for food, as do many wild animals. In the tropics, grass is used for building materials and clothing. Bamboo is used for making homes and bridges. Grass is used to make mats, furniture, window shades, floor coverings, cooking utensils, and water pipes. Musical instruments, fishing poles, and toys are made from grass plants.

Are all the plants you see in the lawn the same? If children examine one area, they will probably find many other kinds of plants growing with the grass, such as clovers, violets, dandelions, chickweed, cinquefoil, buttercups, and wild strawberry.

You and your class can spend months exploring the lawn ecosystem. What about this area as a habitat, or home? What signs do you see of animal life? Sometimes little trails can be seen in the grass. Who makes them?

NUTRITION

- For snack, have a grass feast! Corn, rice, wheat, oats, and barley can be used in recipes, or cooked plain to taste by themselves.
- Make some popcorn.
- Grow some grass. Lemon grass can eaten. It is often used in Thai and other Asian recipes.

MUSIC

- Sing songs such as "The Green Grass Grew All Around" and "Oats, Peas, Beans, and Barley Grow."
- Stretch blades of grass between the thumbs and whistle.

ART

- Pick some grass, tie it in a bundle, and hang it upside down to dry. Use the dried grass as a building material—make a roof for a house, a grass skirt for a doll, or build a bird's nest.
- Braid long grass to make garlands. Decorate them with wild flowers found on the lawn.
- Use the grass from the lawn mower bag to make collages. Spread glue on paper and sprinkle on the grass. CAUTION: Make sure that children do not have grass allergies before they take part in these activities.

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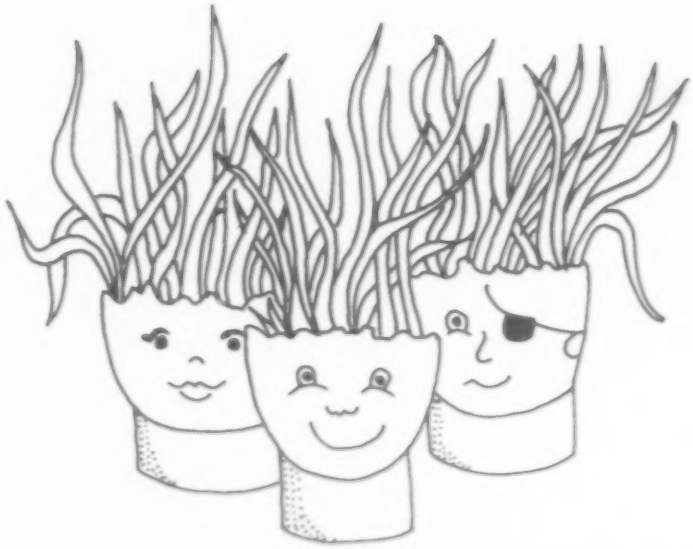
GRASSY EGGHEADS

YOU'LL NEED:

- 5 cardboard strips (6"x1")
- 5 empty eggshell halves
- plastic wrap
- sponge
- cotton puff
- coffee grounds
- vermiculite
- soil
- grass seed
- glue
- water mister
- marker



WHAT TO DO:

1. Adult makes a cardboard collar to set the eggshell into by gluing the ends of the cardboard strip together. Place eggshell on collar.

2. Fill each eggshell half with one of the following:
- a sponge
- a cotton puff
- soil
- vermiculite
- coffee grounds

3. Sprinkle one teaspoon grass seed over materials in each egg.

4. Dampen seeds in each eggshell with water mister. Cover egg halves with plastic wrap.

5. For one week: keep seeds moist and out of direct sunlight.

After one week: uncover seed sprouts and place in direct sunlight

6. Use marker to draw faces on eggshells.

Activity and art by Kathy Faggella (from *Think It Through*, First Teacher Press)

FLOWER POWER

by Sherry Burrell

Why do people love flowers? Why do people give flowers to one another? What magical powers do flowers hold?

The "power" of the flower seems to "stem" from a combination of stimulation of sensations of smell, touch, and beautiful sights, and a cultural message of friendship, compassion, love, or even passion. When you awaken young children to the wonder and joy of "flower power," you are enabling those children to reach out to those they love. At the same time, you are teaching them about the more "scientific" side of the world of flowers.

FLOWER POWER IN COLOR

Use flowers to help children learn about colors in the natural world. There are many wonderful children's books dealing with the topic of color, but one that includes flowers on nearly every page is *See What I Am* by Roger Duvoisin (Lothrop, Lee and Shepard). Besides mentioning chrysanthemums, daffodils, lilacs, and roses, the book also teaches children that white added to other colors makes pastels, and that black added creates grayer shadings. Flowers grow in as many shades of colors as are possible to create!

In the art area, encourage children to mix the primary colors (red, yellow, and blue) in various pairings to create new colors; then invite them to add white to "discover" the pastels! Above the easel area, post pictures of all kinds of flowers. (Spring garden catalogs are a most valuable source.) Encourage children to "dab" many different colors on paper to create the impression of a field of flowers!

FLOWER POWER IN FEELINGS

In our culture, flowers do indeed "send a message." We use flowers in all types of ceremonies and celebrations, both solemn and joyful.

As children enter school one morning, present each one with the gift of a single flower! Watch their faces; maybe even take instant-developing pictures. Then, at circle time, ask children to share how it felt to receive a flower as a gift. Ask for their ideas about why they think people give flowers to one another. Find out if they know what occasions often call for flowers. Will they think of weddings, funerals, birthdays, anniversaries, religious ceremonies, holidays, graduations, and hospitalizations? Or will they think of the times they've picked a bunch of dandelions or wild flowers from their own backyards and presented them to a friend, a grandpa, or a mom? Did they experience "flower power" first-hand? How did the person to whom they gave their gift respond?

What feelings are elicited by flowers? One book that deals indirectly with this topic is *A Fresh Look at Flowers* by Laura Jean Allen (Franklin Watts). In this story, flowers are shown as having feelings of their own! They feel friendly, happy, sad, sweet, funny, show-offish, tall, small, mad, sad, thirsty, and tired! It's a great book to show children the wide range of feelings that exist! Once feelings have been explored a little more, it might be fun to invite children to "act out" this story, showing with their faces and bodies all the different feelings expressed by the flowers.

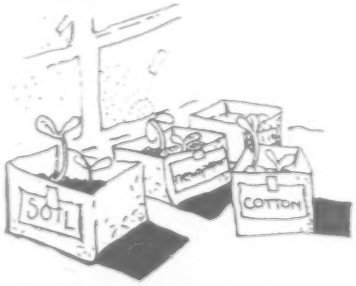
For an art activity that goes along with this same theme," let children create collages of the

flowers they connect with certain feelings by cutting up flower catalogs. One child may choose to make a collage of tall, proud flowers, and may include the bright, bold colors of the tallest flowers he can find!

FLOWER POWER IN SCIENCE

What better tool is there to study nature and plant life than raising flowers? Children who raise their own flowers experience the joy of gardening that comes so naturally to all those who love to "root in the dirt." When children plant seeds and watch a "rainbow of colors" emerge from their efforts, the "power" of flowers again unfolds itself. Read the book *A Rainbow of My Own* by Don Freeman (Puffin).

There are many wonderful books about planting seeds and growing flowers. One is *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle (Crowell). In this story, seeds in nature are blown about by the wind and land in many different places. A natural follow-up activity for this book is one in which the science center is set up to parallel the travels of the seeds in the story. Try planting seeds in snow/ice, in water, in "desert" sand, on grass, or in dirt. Where do seeds grow best? Ask children for their own ideas by giving them a sentence stem to finish: *"I wonder if a seed would grow in ..."* Then let them try out some of their ideas! Children can plant seeds in sandbox sand, in wood chips, in sugar, in a cup of soda, in grass clippings, in dried-up leaves, in shredded newspaper, and even in cotton! Help children learn to "make observations" and "draw conclusions." (*"What do you see?"* and *"Why do you think it's doing that?"*) Be sure to plant seeds in regular soil as well. Also make sure that every child ends up with a real live flower!



FLOWER POWER IN WORDS

There are many beautiful words to learn when flowers fill the classroom! Besides all the color words, children learn the parts of the plant (*seed, stem, leaf, bud, flower, petal,* and *seed pod*), the things plants need in order to grow (*food, water, sunlight,* and *love*), and the names of many different kinds of flowers! Two terrific books that lend themselves well to young children are *The Rose in My Garden*, by Arnold Lobel (Greenwillow), and *Alison's Zinnia*, by Anita Lobel (Greenwillow). Both of these stories are rich in vocabulary words. The first is an add-on sequence story, and the second is an alphabet book that uses alliteration as a vocabulary-building technique (*"Alison acquired amaryllis..."*). Both have exceptional illustrations, and lend themselves to endless art activities with flowers as the theme.

Flowers have power! Using flowers as a teaching theme is a powerful tool for teachers because it lends itself so well to integration into dramatic play (garden shop), creative movement, (acting out stories), science activities, language enrichment, and of course, art projects. Most importantly, when children are given the opportunity to share a flower with someone they love, they find out how special flowers really are!

BLOWN AWAY

by Sandra Gratias

Spring is the time for lots of weather changes and lots of windy days. Use the air and wind to liven up your classroom! It can blow creativity into many aspects of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Wind is air that is moving. But what is air? It can t be seen or tasted, but it can be heard and felt. Prove that it exists.

- Is an empty glass really empty? Stuff a tissue into a glass and lower into a bowl of water. What will happen to the tissue? Remove the glass and check. Why is it dry? Something kept the water out. That something is air!

Lower it again and tap the glass to release the air. (That is what the bubbles are!) What happens to the tissue now?

- Next, blow air into a balloon. The air pushes out the sides to give the balloon its shape. It can even lift things. Put the flat balloon under some books and blow it up. Watch the books rise! When you blow up a balloon and let it go, what makes it fly? (The air rushing out pushes it!)
- Now you are ready to create some wind. Blow on your hand. Wave it quickly in the air to feel the breeze.
- Then try this. Scatter foam packing pieces in a circle on the floor. Stand outside the circle and drop a heavy book in the middle. The book pushes the air out of the way and the resulting wind disperses the pieces! Scatter the pieces in front of an open door. Slamming the door will blow the pieces too!

CREATIVE MOVEMENT

- Wind can be a strong gale or a gentle breeze. Explore the difference in fast and slow movements to music. Let children wave their arms fast and slow. "Fly" around the room quickly, slow down and stop, then whoosh away again!
- Have children pretend to be trees and wave their arms as if in a storm, or on a gentle spring day.
- Watch leaves being blown. They move up and down, land and take off, and spin. Imitate them! If you live in the midwest, observe the tumbleweeds as they bounce and turn and then act them out.
- Have children pretend to be bubbles or balloons. Inflate, float around, bounce, and then deflate or pop.

ART

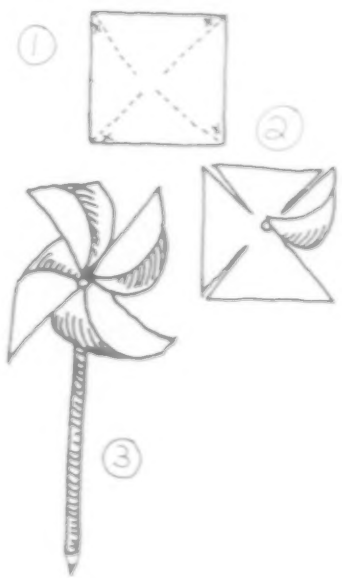
- Use the wind to make some artwork. Put puddles of thinned tempera paint on construction or fingerpaint paper. Let children blow the paint around with a drinking straw. It looks like fireworks!

- Try wetting a sheet of paper and then blowing powdered paint off your hand onto it. (Or let the wind do it outside on a windy day!)
- To make **bubble pictures**, mix dishwashing liquid in watered down tempera paint in small whipped topping or one-pound margarine containers. Insert a straw in the liquid and blow bubbles up over the edge. Lay a piece of paper over the top and press gently. Overlap different colors.

WIND TOYS

Make things to play with in the wind.

- Make a **fish kite**! Cut large fish shapes out of easel paper—two per child. At the mouth end, cut a tab. Staple the sides together along the edges. Fold the tab around a pipe cleaner circle and staple to form an opening. Attach string to two sides of the circle. Let children decorate the kites as they wish. Then encourage them to run outside with the fish flying and twirling behind them!
- **Wind socks** can be made by letting children decorate a 9" X 12" sheet of construction paper with stickers, stampers, crayons, and markers. Staple four streamers along one long edge. Roll the paper into a tube and staple together along the 9" edges. Add the yarn at the top and hang outside.
- For **pinwheels**, decorate a square of paper 4" X 4". Cut each corner diagonally to 1/2" from the center. Fold the left corner of each resulting triangle to the center and staple or tape. Attach the pinwheel to a pencil eraser with a straight pin.



CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

- Poetry is often not a favorite topic of elementary students, so start the love of poetry in preschool. Check anthologies for poems about the wind such as "Who Has Seen the Wind?" by Robert Louis Stevenson, "The Moon's the North Wind's Cookie" by Rachel Lindsay, and "Come Little Leaves" by George Cooper. Read poems and let children illustrate them and act them out. Enjoy the images they create.
- Stories which feature the wind and bubbles include:

| *The Windy Day* by Janet Craig (Troll)

| *The Magic Kite* by Kira Daniel (Troll)

| *Bubbles, Bubbles*, by Mercer Mayer (Troll)

| *Harold's Runaway Kite* by Thomas Crawford (Troll)

Spring is the perfect time to celebrate the wind! So hang some wind chimes, open the windows, and get blown away!

LET'S PRETEND: IT'S SPRING!

by Susan M. Root

When the warm spring weather comes, children want to be outside and run and jump and play. But we all know that the springtime can be rainy, muddy, and cold as well. Getting children involved in creating some simple masks and headbands to portray springtime animals, flowers, and weather is a wonderful way to deal with spring fever. When you add some simple songs and movement activities, you'll have children creating their own springtime fun.

The foundation for these activities is simple.

Start with a paper plate. To make paper plate rings (masks for very young children), cut the center out of a paper plate for the child's face to show through. For full face masks made with paper plates, cut eye holes only in the paper plate. Both types of masks can be attached to a handle for the child to hold in front of his face. Paint stirrers work well, but you can make your own sturdy handles by opening up a paper bag (or a sheet of newspaper) and cutting a large square. Roll the paper bag on the diagonal to form a strong tube. Cut to the length desired and attach to the mask.

Headbands can be made using three-inch strips of paper grocery bags for the band. (The fiber in the bags makes them sturdier than construction paper.) Children can attach construction paper or paper plate shapes to the band to portray spring flowers, animals, or weather. Let them be creative in decorating their masks and headbands by using these ideas.

Flower Sponge paint in pastel colors or use tissue paper dabbers (crumpled tissue paper dipped into paint) to decorate the masks and headbands. Adding sand or salt to the paint will give it extra texture and sparkle.

Animals Let children draw an animal or provide outlines for them to trace and cut and staple to the headbands. Adding paint, collage materials, cotton balls, or fabric scraps will help children create special effects. Help them problem solve to find ways to create ears, tails, or feet.

Weather Sun, clouds, and wind are easily created by simple outlines. Add ribbon to the edges of the paper plates to mimic the rays of the sun and the breezes from the wind.

You and your children can create a spring "dance" by planning movements for all the flowers, trees, animals, and weather. You can name body parts and ask children to suggest movements. For example, *"How could your arms show me that the flower is blooming?"* Let children be creative as you guide them through a gentle rainstorm, a warm sunny day, a cool spring evening, and a thunderstorm. Don't forget to include a rainbow at the end of your "dance."

You and your children will be able to add many more verses depending on the props they have created. If you keep the headbands and masks on hand, you'll be able to repeat and extend this activity throughout the spring. Children will be creating, moving, and celebrating the season!

MADE BY KIDS

INTERACTIVE BULLETIN BOARDS:

A Creative Partnership

by Jeannine Perez

Our powers of observation become easily jaded, and often we do not really see what is around us. Wall decorations in particular, become just part of the environment, and we no longer really look at them. When children take responsibility for the decorations, the center becomes alive and everchanging, which motivates problem-solving, observation, and appreciation.

The bulletin boards in your room can be casual and created by children. That doesn't mean that they are unplanned or hastily thrown together. What follows are suggestions for helping your children create bulletin boards that are a learning process in themselves.

Document your children's efforts by photographing the boards, and filling a scrapbook with the pictures. The scrapbooks will be useful to you and to future classes provide inspiration.

Generate many ideas for backgrounds during group times.
Backgrounds do not need to always be colored paper. Let children experiment with burlap, sheets, old newspapers, gift wrap, black garbage bags (good for space bulletin boards), and wallpaper samples. Talk about the importance of a good background, and how it changes the character of the board.

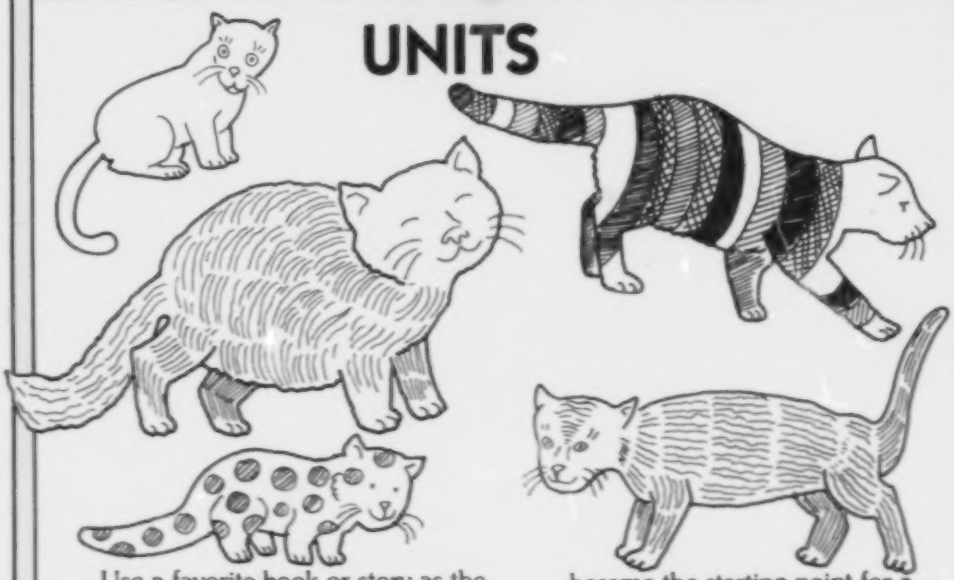
Make personalized borders.
Show children how to fold and cut paper doll-type borders. Use tissue or other light-weight papers that can be easily cut, and make the border a composite of each child's efforts—all in different colors. Borders can surround the center design, decorate just the top or the bottom, or enclose the sides like curtains.

Offer children graffiti/scribble boards.
Use brightly colored posterboards or long strips of brown paper to cover a wall-space or bulletin board and tell children that it is there, beautifully blank, just right for scribbles, pictures, or messages. When one graffiti board is filled, offer a new empty space. A blackboard that isn't often used can also become a graffiti board. You may wish to keep the first graffiti board of the year to compare with the final one at the end of the year.

Make sticky-boards.
Use self-adhesive paper (Contac) in a different way—sticky side out. Small pictures, notes, or nature items such as leaves, seeds, and twigs can be added to make an ever-changing composition. Consider the work of art done when it is full or the background is no longer sticky. You can frame the composition if you wish, and begin another.

DECORA

UNITS



Use a favorite book or story as the beginning of a bulletin board. Ask children what part they liked the best and why. Talk about the art or illustrations, characters, and plot.

For example, the story of *Fat Cat* by Ezra Jack Keats (Scholastic) became the starting point for a bulletin board covered with fat cats, skinny cats, and rainbow-colored cats. You can do more elaborate ones that are influenced by just one scene in a book.

RECENT HAPPENINGS

This can be combined with the parent's board to keep everyone informed of happenings and current interests. Let children decide what to display. It could be Show and Tell items, photos, children's pictures drawn to illustrate something that happened, news items, or notes.

Remember!
School Picnic
Tuesday, June 12
Noon

BOOKS

Use your current unit as a theme for a bulletin board. Ask children to plan and decorate the board, offering ideas only if they have trouble coming up with their own. Their ideas will become an excellent assessment tool for you, as you quickly learn what has been remembered and even more important, what interested your children the most.

For example, a unit on dinosaurs resulted in a bulletin board with new dinosaurs and many volcanoes. The children had heard of dinosaurs all their lives, but talking about the environment of the dinosaurs, and the possibility that a volcano might have been a reason for their demise, were new ideas children wanted to explore further.

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TE BY THEMES

MAKE A GARDEN WALL.

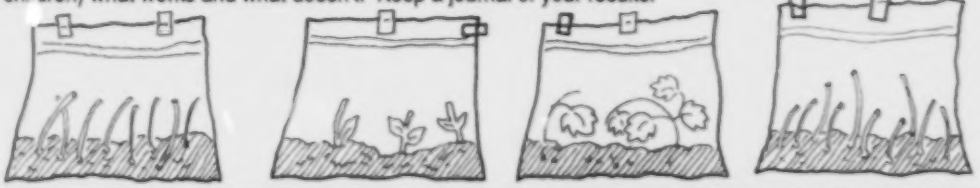
Make living green bulletin boards. They can be made in many ways.

BACKGROUNDS

- Sometimes the background of the bulletin board is blue over brown to give the effect of sky and earth.
- Children can cover the board with old newspapers.
- Burlap is also an excellent background for plants.
- Children can cut out all sizes and shapes of green leaves from your scrap box, and cover the board with paper leaves. They can cut individual (large) colored flowers and staple them around as a border.

PLANTS

- Helping each child plant a bean or corn seed by placing it between the side of a zip-locking plastic sack and a wet paper towel is always successful, and the magic of watching your whole wall sprout and grow inside the clear sack is wonderful! Beans do produce awesome sprouts!
- You can partially filled the sacks with potting soil mixture and sprinkle on easily grown seeds. (Marigolds or grass seeds work well.) The tops of the bags are opened after the seeds sprout and young seedling eventually can be set into regular pots.
- Make miniature rain forests (in sealed plastic sacks), by pinching off small starts of easily rooted plants (ivy, bridal wreath, or other tiny leaved plants). Push them down into the soil, water, then seal and staple them to the board. They not only root, but grow to the top of the sacks, and put out tiny white air roots in the moist environment.
- Experiment with these ideas and vary the planting medium, seeds, and procedure to find out (with your children) what works and what doesn't. Keep a journal of your results.



Newspaper Current Events

You can make a current events bulletin board that gets fatter and fatter as the year progresses. Ask parents to help their children gather newspaper and magazine articles that interest them (space articles, when you are talking about the moon; election pictures; local news; etc). Discuss the articles and staple them to a large bulletin board. As more recent news is brought in, simply staple it over the older news.

Close to the end of the year, have a "PULL-DOWN," removing layer after layer of happenings, and talking about them again. It's fun to compare and remember again events that you've already forgotten. Make a scrapbook of the smaller articles in sequence.

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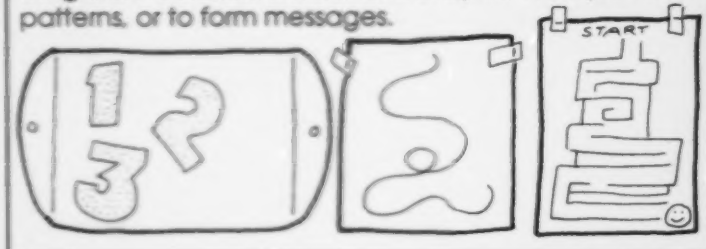
MADE BY KIDS

BULLETIN BOARD GAME

If you have a small, out-of-the-way wall space, reserve it for learning games. Change it often, and let children move parts or solve puzzles in their own time. On half of it, attach enlarged laminated mazes that can be worked and then wiped off. Or provide a series of pictures that tell a story (in the wrong order). Children can rearrange the pictures in sequence. Sometimes display a large black piece of paper with a squiggle in the center and invite children to change the mark into a picture. At other times, mount pictures telling a story, and leave one black, so that children can change the beginning, middle, or ending of a familiar story.

The other half of the board can have a large metal cookie sheet. (You could also use a flannel board or a magnetic board if you wish). On this board, children can arrange and rearrange magnetic numbers, letters, and shapes, in sequence, patterns, or to form messages.



THREE-D DISPLAYS

Bulletin boards are not necessarily flat, two-dimensional displays. Stack boxes to make a kiosk that can be decorated on all sides, or use screens, easels, hanging displays, or sculptures as backgrounds for bulletin boards.

EXPAND ON BULLETIN BOARDS

Expand on children's ideas for bulletin boards and connect them to other parts of your curriculum. For example, Tim loved trying on shoes, and talked his friends into planning and making a bulletin board entitled SHOES, SHOES, SHOES. The children decided to draw a picture of the Old Woman and her children in a shoe at one end of the board, and a large tree at the other. In between, they stretched a clothesline, which became a shoe trail. They drew as many kinds of shoes as they could think of, cut them out, and fastened them to the line with clothespins. The bulletin board took them very little time to create.

Follow-up Ideas:

- Play a game like Musical Chairs, but with shoes. Everyone has to pick their shoes out of the pile in the center, and quickly put them on, when the music stops.
- Act out the final scene in Cinderella. Then become the elves who made shoes for the cobbler.
- In art, cut pictures of shoes from old catalogs and make a shoe collage.
- Visit a shoe repair shop, and back in the classroom, trace each child's leg and foot, then let them add details.
- Talk about BIG FOOT and discuss what he could do about coverings for his large hairy feet. Make your own BIG FEET from large brown grocery sacks by loosely stuffing with newspapers, stapling the opening shut, cutting another opening in the side (just large enough to insert feet, then glueing on ten big hairy toes cut from paper).

CREATIVE—MOVEMENT

by Margery A. Kranyik

Spring has sprung...Let's get moving! As the earth around us begins to change, let's explore ways to celebrate these changes through movement and song.

As the March winds blow, read *Gilberto and the Wind* by Marie Hall Ets (Viking), *Dance of the Wind* by Ron Balton (Scholastic) or other appropriate stories about the wind. Then try the following activities.

❇ **Wind Puppet** Take two nine-inch paper plates. Fold one in half. Cut the other in half. Glue or staple each half on the back of folded plate to form pockets for thumb and fingers. Decorate with cut tissue or crepe paper strips glued to the edge of the plate. Enjoy the puppets outdoors in the wind.

❇ **Sheet Fun** Assemble children in a circle outdoors. Using a parachute or sheet, try to catch the wind currents as children hold on to the sides of the sheet. Move in toward the center and out. Move around in a circle.

❇ **Kite Dance** Have children design and decorate kites (see page 17). Attach string and crepe paper tails. Take your tape player outdoors and play an instrumental favorite. Encourage children to move and fly their kites using the music as background. Make suggestions such as, *"Can you skip with your kite to the music?"* (or twirl, slide, sidestep)

Variation: Use crepe paper streamers held in hands to move and dance to music.

❇ **Cloud Parade** Read *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles Green Shaw (Harper & Row). Look out the window at cloud formations or go outdoors to observe the sky. During art time, have children cut out cloud shapes from white paper. Children can hold the clouds above their heads while they move to appropriate music such as a selection from *The Nutcracker Suite* by Tschaikovsky, *Peer Gynt Suite* by Grieg or *Carnival of Animals* by Saint-Saens. Encourage them to parade in a circle or move up, down, to the side, fast, slow, in, or out.

❇ **April Showers** Teach children the following chants: *"Rain, Rain, go away, the boys and girls here want to play."* (or variations of your choice), and *"It's raining, it's pouring, the old man is snoring. He went to bed and covered his head and he didn't get up 'til the morning."* As children recite the chants, have them pretend to be rain drops falling.

❇ **May Flowers** Have children make flower masks (see page 18). Play "Waltz of the Flowers" by Tschaikovsky from the *Nutcracker Suite*. Encourage children to move within your boundaries as the music plays. Chant: *"Wake up Earth, Make flowers grow!"*

Talk about how flowers grow. Have children pantomime plant growth from seeds. Ask questions such as, *"How would you look if you were a seed just planted in the ground?" "What happens when the sun shines and the rain falls?" "Show us how you begin to sprout roots. A stem. Leaves." "Lift your head to the sun as you grow taller...and taller to reach up high to the sun."*

During music time, as you set the stage for spring activities, teach children a variety of spring songs found in *Piggy Back Songs* and *More Piggy Back Songs* compiled by Jean Warren (Totline).

SPRING OUTDOORS INTO THE ARTS

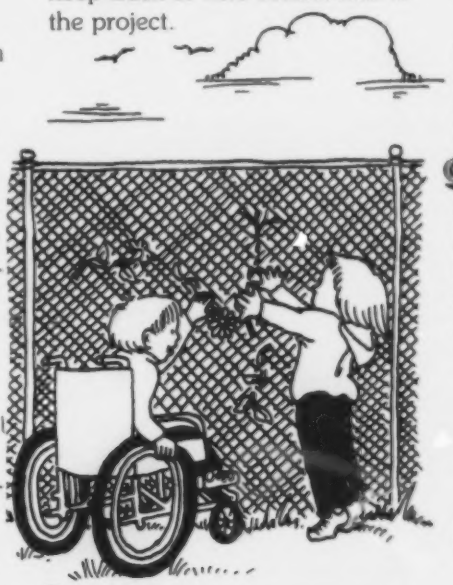
by Cheryl Markovic

If the seasons were music, spring would be the sound of children singing. If they were paint colors, spring would be infant green with a hint of yellow. What better time to develop creative expression than in spring by taking music, movement, and art outdoors.

Teachers and children need to shake winter's cobwebs from their creative souls by moving outdoors. Take the opportunity to bring spring into your curriculum by developing projects and activities that could only take place in the excitement of this season.

Talk with your children about the flowers in bloom. Identify abundant flowers such as dandelions, clover, violets, or even new grass. Take children on a walk to gather these flowers to weave a spring cloth. With pot holder looms, string only the horizontal or vertical sides and let children weave their collections of flowers back and forth through the string. The "fabric" will not last, but the experience of gathering, weaving, and creating will.

If children pick forsythia or blooming branches, the chain links of a fence make a wonderful temporary loom. Children can weave the young branches in and out of the holes on the fence. Along with the branches, they can add ribbons and yarn for more color. This project could stay put and grow as spring passes. Ask children to keep track of who contributed to the project.



Music and spring are naturals. Listen to people as they walk—humming is a norm in spring. Bring your tape players outside. If you can, find a grassy spot to play music. Have a box of scarves, lace curtains or any light fabric pieces. Ask children to make the scarves move to the sound of birds singing, the wind blowing, the flowers growing. Listening to music outside is so different from being indoors. Ask children why. Document their responses.

While you have the music outside, bring out paints, too. Play music as children paint. A big spring mural on butcher paper is a group project many children can participate in.

The "natural" paint of spring is mud. Let children fingerpaint with mud, footpaint and feel the squishiness between their toes.

Spring is too special not to experience it body and soul. Read spring poems and books. Pause frequently and ask children to listen. Have them write a spring story.

O sweet spontaneous
earth how often have
the dotting
fingers of
prurient philosophers
pinched
and
poked
thee...

E.E. Cummings understood the magic of spring. He painted word pictures.

Encourage your children to paint word pictures. Have a large tablet and markers to write their words in different colors. Read back their word pictures so they can hear their words spoken by someone else. There is no music more lovely to a child's ears than the sound of their names. Take a deep breath and let the muses free!

DAYDREAMS IN THE CLOUDS

by Ava McVey

Spring has finally arrived! Warm sunshine, blooming flowers, and singing birds make everyone long to be outdoors! Take advantage of the beautiful weather with this fun art activity.

YOU'LL NEED:

- *The Cloud Book* by Tomie De Paola (Holiday House)
- one piece of white construction paper for each child
- cotton balls
- glue
- crayons or markers
- a sample "cloud picture" that you have made
- a bulletin board with the title: DAYDREAMS.

WHAT TO DO:

1 Let children share what they think clouds are made of. Read *The Cloud Book* aloud.

2 Then take children outdoors to observe clouds. Try to identify different types of clouds using the pictures in the book. Next, ask children to look for pictures or shapes in the clouds. Give each child an opportunity to describe what he sees.

Then take children back to the classroom to make "cloud pictures." Use your sample picture to help clarify each of the following steps.

3 On a piece of white construction paper, use a pencil to draw the shape or picture of a cloud. For example, if a child saw the shape of a pony, he would draw a pony on his paper. Remind children to draw the shape at the top of the paper because it is a cloud in the sky.

4 Glue cotton inside the lines of the drawing to make it fluffy. The cotton can be torn or stretched to fit the shape of the cloud.

5 At the bottom of the page, let each child draw a picture of himself looking at the cloud. Trees, flowers, and birds can also be added to the picture.

6 Color blue sky and green grass to fill in around the clouds and other parts of the drawing. Remind children to do this last because they will want to use assorted colors for the birds, trees, flowers, and themselves. If they color the backgrounds first, everything will be green and blue.

7 Hang the pictures on your DAYDREAMS bulletin board.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:

- Occasionally check the clouds in the sky and try to identify them.
- Suggest that children observe clouds at home with their parents. In class the next day, encourage them to share the shapes and pictures seen with Mom and Dad.

In addition to developing imagination and creativity, these activities help children become more aware of the wonders of nature. So the next time it's a beautiful spring day, why not take your class outdoors for some "daydreaming"!

"SING A RAINBOW"

by Barbara Fischer

"Listen with your eyes and sing everything you see," is a thought-provoking line from a wonderful song, "Sing a Rainbow." Rainbows bring thoughts of spring, a season filled with activity. There is much for young children to see, hear, touch, and experience. Take your children on a spring adventure and see how this song comes alive.

This season is a re-creation that we are privileged to witness each year. Share the excitement with your children through art and music. Let the song, "Sing a Rainbow" be the theme of your exploration.

WALK INTO SPRING

Begin your adventure with a spring walk. Your school playground or neighborhood is a good place to start. Be sure to bring chart paper with you to record children's comments and observations. Ask questions. Are there new leaves on the trees? Can you see green grass growing? Flowers blooming? Do you hear birds singing or the wind rustling leaves? Are there any worms wriggling? Caterpillars crawling? Record all the sights and sounds as children discover them. Now, come back to school and let the creativity begin.

RAINBOWS

Even if you didn't see a rainbow on your walk, make your own. Try a giant rainbow for your bulletin board or hang a rainbow mobile from the ceiling. Do children know what colors are found in a rainbow? Use a prism to show them that these colors are always in the same order. As you paint your rainbow, look at the comments from your walk. Can children find the colors they saw on the walk in their rainbow?

GREEN THEME

How many green things did you see on your walk? Did you see different shades of green? Experiment with colors by mixing white, yellow, or blue with green to create different shades of color for the "grass" under your rainbow. If you have a ceiling rainbow, paint your grass on a nearby wall. How many different shades of green can children make?

RAINBOW OF FLOWERS

Ask children to color coffee filters with watercolor markers (not permanent color markers). When the filter is fully colored, spray with water and watch the colors blend together. When they are dry, pin pinch the center and twist about an inch. Attach a pipe cleaner for a stem and paint in the grass. Spray with a little perfume for a sensory treat.

IT'S RAINING...

But that is part of the "spring thing." Enjoy the showers by sprinkling some powdered tempera paint on paper and let the rain finish your painting. While making these pictures, take a few moments to notice how different things look when wet. Are the tree trunks darker? Does the black top on the playground seem shiny? Did the sand in the sandbox become darker? What new sounds do you hear? Can you tap to the beat of the raindrops? What kind of sound do wet boots make when you walk in the rain?

THE SUN'S OUT...

Now it's time for the sun to create pictures for you. Try sun sensitive prints. Make an interesting design with leaves, pebbles, sticks, and other objects on black construction paper. Let the paper stay in the sun as long as possible. Remove the objects—what do you see?

SING TO THE RAINBOW

Sing a rainbow of songs to a world filled with spring color. Make up your own words to familiar tunes. Here is one to get you started. It's "Painting Fun" by Ellen Bedford (Tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

I know the colors for painting fun,
Green like grass and a yellow sun,
An orange pumpkin and white snow,
A red rose and a black crow,
Blue like a mailbox, brown like an ape,
A pink pig and purple grapes.

DANCE TO THE RAINBOW

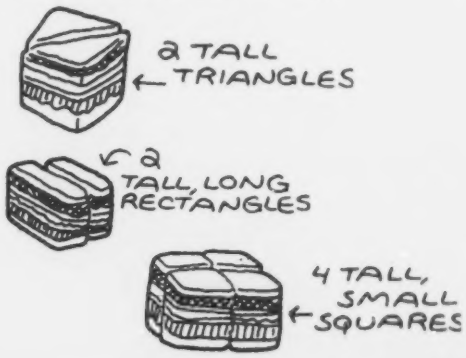
Add color to your dancing by making rainbow sticks. Use smooth dowels about 15 inches long. Wrap the ends of several different colored crepe paper streamers (about 18 inches in length) around the end of the sticks. Secure with masking tape.

Turn on the music and have children try waving their rainbow sticks in circles high over their heads, back and forth, and down low. Make circles to the side or snap them up and down. Then let children make up their own movements.

Spring is a time of change. It can burst upon the scene like fireworks or quiet the air with a lullaby of gently falling rain. Give children an opportunity to discover their own creativity this spring. Let them create their own rainbows.

RAINBOW SANDWICHES

You'll Need: 4 slices of white bread (a good stiff and solid loaf) ▲ 3 oz. package cream cheese at room temperature ▲ jelly or sugarless fruit conserves- strawberry or grape. mint ▲ plastic spoon or knife ▲ sharp knife (ADULT use only)



What to Do:

1. Use a plastic knife to cut crusts off of each slice of bread.
2. With plastic spoon and knife, spread 2 teaspoons of each filling on bread as follows:
   - ◆ strawberry or grape
   - ◆ cream cheese
   - ◆ mint
3. Stack slices on top of each other. (Place into refrigerator for 1/2 hour, if possible, to make slicing easier.)
4. ADULT cuts sandwiches with sharp knife into 2 tall triangles or 2 tall, long rectangle or 4 small, tall squares.

CREATIVE COOKING

by Tania K. Cowling

Stirring, mixing, and measuring equa's planning, preparing, and eating together. Cooking is a hands-on experience that helps children learn science, math, language arts, and even social studies. The art of cooking also enables children to feel good about themselves as they cooperate and create together. Cooking in the classroom invites children to learn and grow using all of their senses.

Emotionally children feel a sense of self-esteem and confidence. Socially they gain respect for each other as they work together to create a group meal or snack. Physically as the child chops, squeezes, and stirs, he is practicing fine motor skills. When they mix, knead, and toss children are exercising large motor control. Sensory perceptions are developed and enhanced by differentiating between food smells, textures, and appearances. Cognitively there are many areas of the curriculum mentioned above that can be integrated into a food making experience.

Your role as the teacher or caregiver is to provide constant adult supervision. Make sure all the equipment in your cooking area is safe and sanitary. Choose simple, but healthy, recipes so children can be involved in planning, preparation, serving and eating.

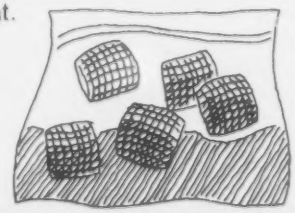
Below are a few cooking ideas with a spring theme for your classroom. (NOTE: Recipes vary on the use of ovens, microwaves, or non-cooked foods. Use accordingly in your school's cooking center.)

MUDDY MIXTURE

You'll Need: 1/4 cup peanut butter ◆ 1/2 cup chocolate chips ◆ 1/4 cup butter ◆ 1/8 teaspoon vanilla

What to Do:

1. Microwave these items for about 90 seconds in a bowl.
2. Pour 4—4 1/2 cups CHEX cereal and mix this with the sauce. Stir to coat.
3. Take this entire mixture and put it into a zip-locking plastic bag with about 3/4 cup of powdered sugar. Shake well to coat.



SANDWICH PEOPLE

Spread a slice of bread with peanut butter or cream cheese. Use a choice of these food items for facial features:

◆ EYES—radish slices, grape halves, cherry tomatoes, or blueberries

◆ NOSE—carrot stick, cucumber wedge or slice, and cheese chunks

◆ MOUTH—avocado slice, apple eighth, or orange slice

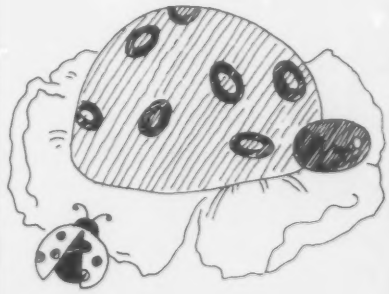
◆ HAIR—bean sprouts or celery leaves

Be creative! Think of other foods that would make interesting or funny faces.

LADYBUG SALAD

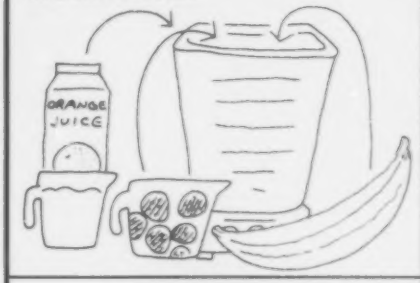
Take a tomato half and place it flat side down onto a lettuce leaf. Use a whole black olive as the bug's head. Take slices of black olives and make spots on the red ladybug.

After you have made this creation, add your favorite salad dressing and enjoy!



SPRINGTIME SMOOTHIE

In a blender, combine one cup orange juice, one banana, and one cup of fresh or frozen strawberries. Blend until smooth and serve cold.

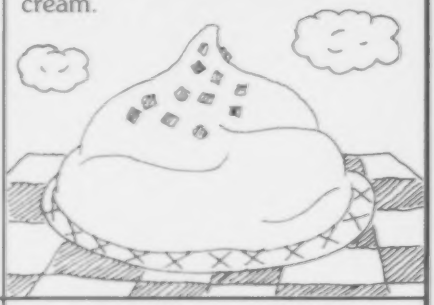


BUTTERFLY SALAD

Place one carrot stick in the center of a lettuce leaf. Now, arrange sliced pineapple halves to appear as the butterfly's wings. Top these with raisin spots. For the butterfly's head, use an olive or seedless grape.

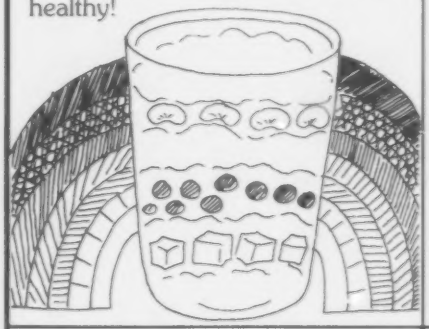
POTATO CLOUDS

Prepare instant mashed potatoes according to package directions. Spoon a cloud onto a plate and garnish with grated cheeses, bacon bits, and/or sour cream.



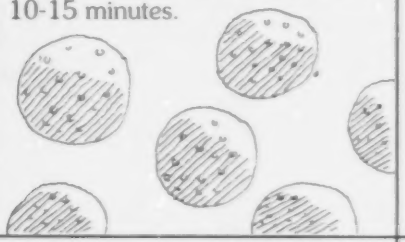
RAINBOW PARFAITS

Layer vanilla yogurt with fruits into a clear glass or cup. Make it colorful with canned or fresh peaches, apples, plums, strawberries, blueberries, and mandarin oranges. Yummy and healthy!



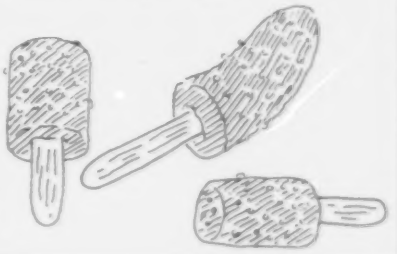
CRISPY CHEESE BALLS

Use one cup grated Cheddar cheese and 4 ounces margarine. First set it at room temperature until soft and then mix well. Add one cup flour and one cup crispy rice cereal. After thoroughly mixed, shape into marble-sized balls. Place on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 350°F for 10-15 minutes.



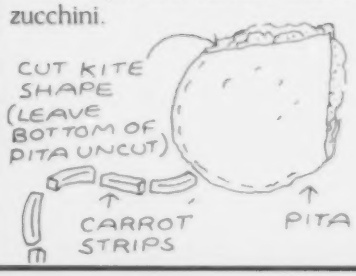
FROZEN BANANAS

Cut a firm ripe banana into thirds. Insert a craft stick into the end of each piece. Place on a pan and freeze. Before you are ready to eat, dip into melted chocolate or diluted peanut butter spread (dilute with orange juice). Roll the banana in toasted wheat germ or finely chopped nuts.



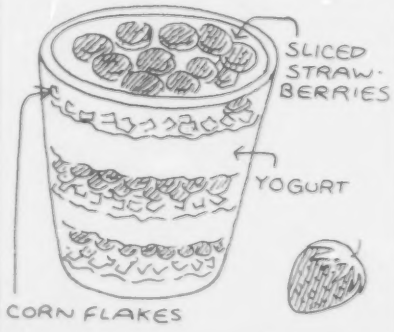
KITE SANDWICH

Cut a kite shape from a whole wheat pita and pack it with your favorite filling. Form the kite string by extending a line from one corner using thin slices of pickles, carrots, and/or zucchini.



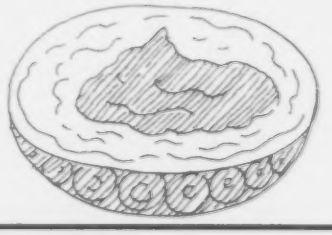
CEREAL PARFAIT

Layer the following: vanilla or fruit yogurt, cornflakes, and sliced strawberries in a clear cup.



PUDDING IN A CLOUD

Help children make instant pudding in class by placing the mix and milk into a closed container and shaking vigorously. Spoon the serving of pudding into a bowl lined with whipped cream to create "pudding in a cloud"!



FIELD TRIPS WITH IMAGINATION

by Karen Stephens

Field trips help you break away from everyday routines. Spring field trips and creativity will go hand-in-hand—if you use your imagination.

When choosing spring field trips, look beyond the old traditional stand-bys, such as the train or fire station. Try unusual trips children may not often experience. Think in terms of stimulating all five of the senses. Creativity is triggered as children explore the world of sights, sounds, textures, tastes, and scents.

Following are field trip ideas to stimulate children to dream, imagine, and think creatively. Some require pre-planning; others can be enjoyed on the spur of the moment. It's always great to capture a teachable moment with an unplanned event.

JET PLANE TRACKS IN THE SKY

When you hear a plane flying ovehead, or when you can predict flight patterns over your play yard, be prepared to go outside or to a nearby park to watch. Have everyone lay on their backs on a sun-kissed, grassy area. Look up at the plane flying overhead. Draw children's attention to the white lines that cross the sky in the wake of a jet's path.

Follow-Up Activities

- **Seek out other lines.** After children have time to marvel at the blue sky with white stripes, go for a walk around the neighborhood. Where else can children find lines created by objects? Can they find line shadows from swing sets? Can they find lines created by bicycles that have driven through a mud puddle? Can they spy lines created by worms tracking across concrete?
- **Create lines with chalk.** After you spy naturally occurring lines in the neighborhood, bring out chalk so children can draw line pictures on the concrete.
- **Go on spider-web hunt.** Yes, follow up one field trip with another one! Visit a field of wildflowers. Can children find spider webs? How can these interesting lines be described? Can children make pretend spider webs using string?
- **Make a progressive story.** Talk about the people riding in the plane you watched fly overhead. Name characters that might be inside the plane. One at a time, let each child contribute ideas to create a story about who the people are, where they are going, and why. They can also make up stories of what people are doing while flying in the plane. You can tape record this story and place it in your listening center to stimulate imaginations for days to come.

AN ARTIST AT WORK IN NATURE

Nature sites may include wildflower gardens, herb gardens, or botanical gardens. Especially beautiful landscapes such as the ocean, mountain, or canyon views also attract artists. (If you are not in an area where artists abound, you can arrange for a high school or college artist to visit a nature site with you.) Encourage children to look closely at how the artist observes scenery to draw. How does the artist use the art tools? What colors are seen and then drawn?

Follow-Up Activities

- **Become nature artists, too.** Give each child a sketch pad or a clipboard with drawing paper attached. Provide a variety of coloring tools for drawing, such as crayons, colored pencils, or markers. Let children pick something they would like to focus on in a drawing. Give them time to draw what they see.
- **Visit an artist's studio or art museum.** Help children notice how art is displayed. How is light used? How does the artist work in the studio? What tools do children recognize?

VISIT A NATURAL HABITAT ZOO

As you tour the zoo, help draw children's attention to animals' body parts. Does each animal move in a special way? How do the animals communicate with each other? How do they communicate with their trainers or feeders?

Follow-Up Activities

Move like the animals. In a large open area, encourage children to move through space in ways in which they observed animals move. Creative movement activities such as slithering like snakes, stretching like leopards, yawning like lions, and hopping like kangaroos helps build creative vocabulary. Problem-solving skills develop as children think about how best to imitate animal movements.

Make paper-mache animals. Bases for paper-mache animals can be made using blown-up balloons or molded chicken wire. Let children dip long strips of newspaper into a glue and water mixture, then drape the wet strips over the base until it is a desirable thickness of paper-mache. Be sure to let children paint their animals when dry.

Make up songs about animals. Let children tape record their own songs about animals. Accompany their songs with rhythm instruments.

Make zoo animal puppets. Provide a variety of objects for puppet making: socks, foam balls paper sacks, etc. Bring out all your "art junk" and let children use the junk, glue, and markers to create their own animal puppets. "Junk" items may include pipe cleaners, doilies, yarn strips, buttons, pom poms, and rick rack.

VISIT A STRAWBERRY PATCH OR ORCHARD

Strawberry patches are lovely, fragrant, and best of all, tasty. They really stimulate all five senses! Find a patch where the owners will allow your children to pick strawberries on their own. Help children explore the strawberries using all their senses.

Follow-Up Activities

Cook with strawberries. Cooking projects stimulate creativity. How many ways can children think of to prepare strawberries? Try them all out. Can you make strawberry pie, jam, bread, shortcake, pancakes, ice cream, shakes?

Turn your dramatic play center into a farmers' market. Provide baskets, cash register, play money, fruit posters for advertising, plastic foods, etc. Let children pretend to operate or shop at the farmers' market. Dramatic play such as this encourages creative use of language skills.

Plant a strawberry patch. Even if you don't have a large gardening area, strawberries can be grown in clay containers especially built for growing them. Contact your local garden nursery for details.

Have children author a non-fiction book on strawberries. After children visit a strawberry patch, have them dictate to you all the information they learned about strawberries. What do they look like? Do they grow on trees, vines, or bushes? Are they big or small? How are they different from other fruits? How can strawberries be used? What do they need to live? What types of animals like to eat strawberries?

Let children draw pictures to illustrate their book. Display the book so parents see how creatively children use language.

IN THE

A SPRING-TIME SAMPLER

by Paula Gaj Sitarz

These stories will encourage your children to think about what happens in the spring. They are perfect springboards for creative dramatics, art, and story writing activities.

▮ In *Swamp Spring* (Macmillan) Carol and Donald Carrick combine a short, poetic text with expressionistic watercolors in shades of browns, greens and blues to concisely convey spring— from its warmth and melting snow to rain and birds building nests.

▮ Steven Kroll introduces children to Mark in *I Love Spring* (Holiday House). Mark tells what he sees and hears in the spring: trees blooming, birds chirping, and puppies soft as velvet. He smells sweet new grass and feels a soft breeze on his face. Mark plays at the playground, plants flowers and vegetables, celebrates Easter and Passover at his friend's house, goes to a baseball game, enjoys a rain shower, a camping trip and napping on the porch swing with his dad.

▮ Bruce McMillan has photo-illustrated Raffi's song, *Everything Grows* (Crown) to create an appealing book with photographs of children, animals, and nature to accompany Raffi's lyrics about growing. Youngsters will see babies, puppets, children, flowers, piglets, children eating fruit on a farm, birds, leaves on trees, the sun and rain. The text includes Raffi's song with music and lyrics; it's easy for young children to learn.

▮ *When Spring Comes* (Henry Holt and Co.) is an excellent photo-essay by Robert Maas that will give young children an appreciation of photography and maybe excite them to take their own photographs of spring. Maas combines short sentences with one main concept per page and photographs that are interesting and varied. This book gets children thinking about what spring is and what they can do during spring. They'll see children flying kites, an overview of a neighborhood, trees with new green leaves, farmers plowing with tractors, crocuses and daffodils, newborn animals, April showers, and children dancing around a maypole on May Day.

▮ Anne Rockwell in short, clear text celebrates the joys of spring by following a young girl who is looking for the robin who sang to her the previous year in *My Spring Robin* (Macmillan). While the young girl searches, she also explores and discovers other interesting facets of nature in her backyard. She sees a bee taking honey from a crocus, fuzzy fiddleheads, a tiny toad hopping behind daffodils, and a shiny earthworm. Finally, she hears the "*cheer-up cheerilee*" of her spring robin.

RESOURCE BOOKS

There are several books filled with activities about spring that will develop young children's creativity.

▮ *The Giant Encyclopedia of Theme Activities for Children 2 to 5: Over 600 Favorite Activities Created by Teachers for Teachers* (Gryphon House) will provide you with many creative projects that invite young children to explore spring. Check the sections on Nature, Plants, and Spring and you'll find art projects like "Lily Pads," "Hand Print Tulips," "Spring Mud Painting," and "Sunflower." Children will enjoy "Writing and Singing a New Seed Song" and "Spring Is Here," a creative movement activity.

▮ *Get Set...Go!: Spring* by Ruth Thompson (Children's Press) is full of spring projects. You can excite children about doing the projects because a full-color photograph of each completed craft is included. Perfect to share with very young children are: "Pinwheels," "Decorated Eggs," "Decorated Nest," and "Wooly Greeting Card."

BOOKS THAT LEAD TO QUESTIONS

by Karel Kilimnik

After a snow-drenched winter, we all are eager to see spring. All those wonderful warm weather changes that surround us provide fertile ground for asking questions. Ask children lots of questions and respect all of their answers.

Architect Lester Walker has written a wonderful resource book for teachers and caregivers of young children, *Block Building for Children* (The Overlook Press). The book covers a selection of blocks (using the standard unit blocks system developed by innovative educator Caroline Pratt and discussed in her book, *I Learned from Children*); techniques that can be used to build any block structure; and there are eighteen block building projects.

As you go on walks, take a good look at the buildings and structures on your route. Walker's book provides support in translating what you see into what children can create with blocks. What shapes do you see? How do they fit together? What shape are the windows (or doors)? Where are they located in the building? How can the building be created with blocks?

Byrd Baylor's books deal with nature—from *Everyone Needs a Rock* to *When Clay Talks*. In *I'm in Charge of Celebrations* (Aladdin Paperbacks), she poetically describes her interactions in her environment leading her to create special celebrations such as Dust Devil Day (March 11th), Rainbow Celebration Day (August 9th), and Green Cloud Day (February 6th). Use the book as a springboard for creating your own celebrations as you explore springtime where you live. Some basic questions to consider include: *"What is a celebration?" "What do you/can you do?" "Why do we celebrate?"*

Everyday Mysteries by Jerome Wexler (Dutton Children's Books), presents photos of parts of objects. He uses surfaces, silhouettes, edges, and cross sections to ask, *"What am I?"* The photographs challenge children to figure out what the fragment is part of in order to guess what it is.

Collect outside materials and cover all but a small section to see if children can answer, *"What am I?"* This book can be used to stimulate discussion, make predictions, and develop vocabulary as the fragments are described.

Guess Where You're Going, Guess What You'll Do by A. F. Bauman (Houghton Mifflin) takes the guessing game in a different direction. Instead of guessing what an individual object is, the reader is presented

with several clues to help guess what is happening and where.

Use the book to develop class puzzles. Think of your favorite activity to do together and where it's done. Take a picture and write up your own clues. Make it into a class big book to share with other classes. Can they use your clues to guess correctly?

Donald Crews continues his tradition of writing finely-tuned books for young children with colorful illustrations and simple text in his new book, *Sail Away* (Greenwillow). A family sets off in their sailboat under clear blue skies. The wind puffs their sails and they glide over the water. The blue sky darkens and the wind picks up. The ocean swells dangerously huge but at last the sea calms as they complete their journey to their dock.

During the spring, more time is spent outdoors providing many more opportunities to observe the changes in the weather that Crews captures in his book. Describe the changes you see and feel. What happens? How do you feel?

STILL IN THE BOOK CORNER

SPRING IS ALL AROUND US

by Sandra L. Malcolm

Each book selected this month provides an opportunity for you and your children to go out and explore nature (or have it brought to you). Spring is a wonderful time to open your doors and your imagination to all the wonders around us.

AN EXTRAORDINARY EGG

by Leo Lionni (Alfred A. Knopf) tells us about a young frog and her adventures with an egg that hatches.

BEFORE READING, ask children what it means if something is "extraordinary"? Can you think of things that we might say are "extraordinary"? Show the front and back cover of the book folded out as one picture. Discuss the picture.

AFTER READING, ask, *"How did Jessica find the egg?" "If we find an egg outside, do you think we should move it? Why or why not?" "How do you think the mother alligator felt when her egg was missing?" "Why do you think the frogs called the egg a chicken egg?" "Why did they call the alligator a chicken when it hatched?"*

ACTIVITIES

◆ Make puppets or flannelboard pieces for retelling the story.

◆ Go to a park, beach, or wooded area to look for "extraordinary" things. Before going, discuss leaving things in nature where they are. Encourage children to draw pictures and write stories about what they see.

◆ Show and discuss pictures of eggs and the animals they hatch into. Compare sizes and textures of real eggs if available.

◆ Set up an incubator to hatch your own chicken or duck eggs. Your local 4-H extension can help with this.

THE HONEYBEE AND THE ROBBER

by Eric Carle (Philomel Books) is an interactive picture book about the life of the honeybee.

BEFORE READING, make a puppet of a honeybee. Introduce a song or fingerplay about a bee. Pass out soda crackers spread with honey. Ask children what they think about the taste, feel, and smell of the substance on the crackers. List on chart paper everything children can tell you about honeybees. On another chart, list what they say they want to learn about bees.

AFTER READING, ask, *"Who was the robber?" "Did he get the honey he was after? Why not?" "How did a creature as small as a bee chase away a great big bear?" "What are other ways animals and insects defend themselves?" "Look at your lists. Did you know a lot about bees?"* (first list) *"What new things did you learn?"* (Make a new chart of these responses.) *"Are there still things we don't know?"* (Compare the second and third lists.)

ACTIVITIES

◆ Act out the story. All children can be involved in this story as honeybees, flowers, or the bear. Using a variety of music tempos, encourage the honeybees in your classroom to move around the room to the music. When the music stops, they should land on a flower.

◆ Invite a beekeeper to your school.

PLANTING A RAINBOW

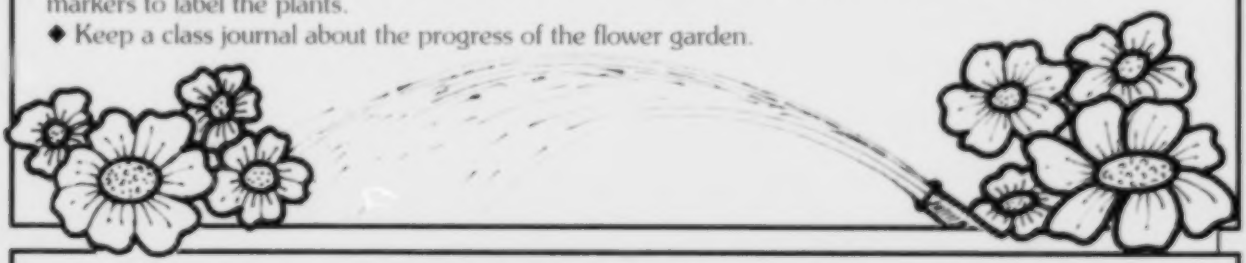
by Lois Ehlert (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) is a story that describes the planting of a colorful garden to help children learn about various types of flowers.

BEFORE READING, bring in a variety of flower bulbs and seeds. Ask children how these could turn into a rainbow. Show pictures of rainbows. Discuss the colors found in rainbows. Use glass prisms and the sun to create rainbows in the room or go outside on a sunny day and spray water into the air with a garden hose. How could you plant a rainbow?

AFTER READING, ask, *"Are there other ways of looking at a rainbow?" "What made the rainbow in our story?" "Was the person telling the story sad when all the flowers were picked? Why or why not?" "Why did part of the book have different-sized pages? When we looked at those pages together, what did they make?"*

ACTIVITIES

- Take a field trip to a greenhouse. While there, purchase seeds and seedlings to plant a flower garden outside your school or center.
- Spade up an area outside your classroom for a flower garden. Encourage children to group their flowers by colors to create a rainbow when it blooms. Use tongue depressors or other appropriate markers to label the plants.
- Keep a class journal about the progress of the flower garden.



THE SHEEP FOLLOW

by Monica Wellington (Dutton Children's Books) tells us that while the shepherd sleeps, his sheep go off on an adventure following many different animals. When it's time to go home, the sheep are too tired to follow the shepherd.

BEFORE READING, recite the nursery rhyme "Little Boy Blue, Come Blow Your Horn." Talk about the poem. Discuss what it means to *follow* someone.

AFTER READING, ask, *"Why do you think the sheep wouldn't follow the shepherd at the end of the story?" "What was the shepherd doing when the sheep left? Why?" "Who did the sheep follow?" "Where did they go?" "How did the sheep get back to the shepherd?" "How did the author show us the kind of fur sheep have?" "How many black sheep were there?" "How many white sheep were there?" How many sheep in all did the shepherd have?"*

ACTIVITIES

- Repeat the rhyme "Little Boy Blue" and play "Follow the Leader."
- If possible, take a field trip to a sheep farm or have a sheep brought to school.
- Have someone visit your classroom to demonstrate how wool goes from sheep to sweater. This could include a spinning wheel demonstration and hands-on experiences for children.
- Provide pieces of sheepskin and skeins of wool yarn for children to handle.
- Make available pieces of yarn, cotton, paper, glue, paints, and other art materials for children to create their own pictures of sheep.

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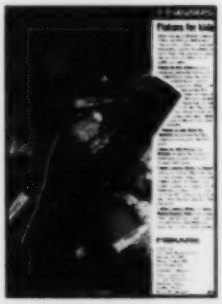

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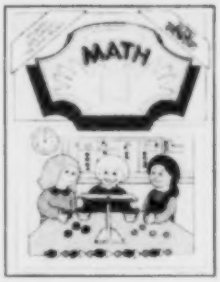

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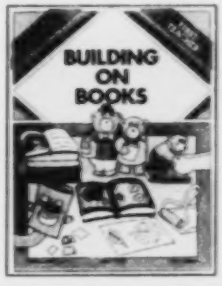

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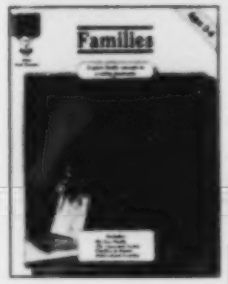

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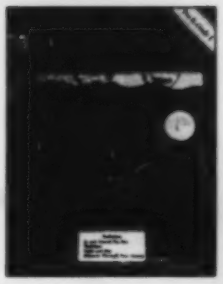

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Art Director ..... Debby Dixler
Editorial and Content Advisors ..... Kathy Faggella, Mary Beth Spann Minucci
Contributing Designers ..... Nina and John Woldin
Logo Design ..... Gene Krackehl
Contributing Photographer ..... Peter Lewin
Production ..... Nina Woldin and Debby Dixler
Editorial Assistant ..... Christine Manavian,
Advertising Inquiries..... 1-800-781-7275

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

by Kathy Faggella and Lisa Lyons Durkin

When most of us were young, summer was a time to play with friends, be out and about in the neighborhood, and explore nature on our own. We learned many valuable lessons in the summer, but those lessons weren't taught in structured classrooms by teachers.

Today's children often spend their summer in day care or a day camp program. However it is possible to capture some of that long ago spirit of informal, child-directed learning, even in a "structured program." Even if you find yourself with much the same group of children in your summer program as you have the rest of the year, you can make this summer different. This issue of *First Teacher* will give you lots of suggestions for low-key learning. But here are some general guidelines to follow.

- Plan many outside activities. You'll find ideas for power picnics, spur-of-the-moment dramatic play, and more in this issue.
- Plan your day with active and quiet activities alternating so children do not get too tired or overstimulated. We'll help you plan a summer carnival and also relax under the "Reading Tree" every day.
- Plan for large muscle activities so that children can climb, run, pedal, and swing. "In the Hands of Children" will give you ideas for doing creative outdoor small motor activities.
- Plan activities that take advantage of summer. Explore the many facets of summer weather and do science experiments in your outdoor water table or wading pool.
- Create a more casual attitude without letting children run wild. Allow children to get messier. (Cleanup is a lot easier.) Give toddlers easy-to-make "goop" to play with. Let children run under the sprinkler to wash off. Let them have a snack or look at a book under a shady tree.
- Teach less; facilitate more. Prepare the environment for creative fun and learning, but let children take the lead. Give them extra-large appliance boxes to create their own villages. Encourage children to experiment with the wonders of nature. Help them explore and discover on their own.

And if the weather is just too hot to go out, Karen Stephens will show you how to bring this same spirit of easy learning inside with parachutes, ice cubes, soap bar sailboats, and frosty cooking ideas.

So make this summer special—keep casual and cool!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

✏ **Kathy Faggella** runs a family literacy program in Stratford, CT for Literacy Volunteers of America. Her program serves people from pre-schoolers to senior citizens. She also teaches a CDA preparation course at a community college. Kathy is the author of several *First Teacher* books and two mentoring books: *Connections from School to Career* and *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall* (Ideas Are Popping Publications). Kathy has developed seven booklets for children who go into the workplace with their parents for a visit or to "job shadow" or when other child care is unavailable. Kathy herself has two children, Kate, 18, and Jim, 29.

✏ **Susan Entz** is working on many projects in the early childhood field in Hawaii. She continues to expand her integrated, science-based, curriculum that comes with adorable fingerpuppets. Susan also teaches early childhood courses at the University. And, she is currently developing curriculum and materials that explore local legends and prominent Hawaiians from history.

PHOTO CREDITS

Peter Lewin: *cover, 9, 16, 24, 25, 29, 31*

ART CREDITS

Debby Dixler: pages 13, 14, 15, 19-22, 23, 27

Janet McDonnell: page 34

Catherine Minor: pages 7, 17, 35

Nina Woldin: pages 5, 10, 11, 25, 32, 33

HELPFUL HINTS

TIPS FOR SUMMER

by Gail P. Jones

Remember "Safety First" as you plan for low key learning this summer. Make sure children use sunscreen—with parental permission and stay out of direct sunlight on hot days and around the noon hour. Have readily available first aid supplies, perhaps in a fanny pack. Have water available to all children throughout the day. Know the signs and first aid for heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Discuss safe and unsafe practices before you go out on a field trip. Be sure to plan ahead for nature walks, knowing what to do in a sudden thunderstorm.

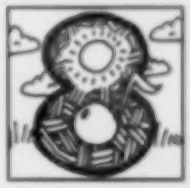
Record stories on cassette tapes. Include bells for turning the page if accompanied by a book or, let children listen to the cassette alone for "easy listening" under the shade of a tree.

Let children prepare snacks to serve outside in fun ways such as popcorn vendor boxes, pretend ice-cream trucks, and snack wagons.

Make summer equipment such as "sit-upons," sun visors, "shoo" hats (if gnats are a problem), and "critter showering cans." Create mud pie-making stations, and safe barefoot walking paths.

Let children make their own water paints, mud clay, natural display areas for arts and crafts, and hanging sheets for water spray painting. Be sure to plan for lots of barefoot painting while it's easy to clean up!

Create chalk games on the blacktop or cement areas. Include such things as number hopscotch and U.S. maps for jumping from state to state. Start each day with a different shape that children can change into something else using their imaginations!



Play music of all types throughout the day outside for music and movement activities as well to inspire pretend play.

Put numbers on bikes, wagons, and outside vehicles so children can park them in numerical order or line up from 10-1 at the carwash.

Let children make wooden or cardboard signs for GO, STOP, WALK, YIELD, etc.

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TODDLER TIME

LOW-KEY LEARNING FOR TODDLERS

by Jeannine Perez

It has been said that play is a young child's work. Through play, children recreate the world in order to understand it.

Toddlers take joy in the repetition of very simple activities, and their sense of playfulness delights us. One of the first forms of interactive play for an infant is *Peek-a-boo*. No matter how often it is repeated, babies will giggle with enthusiasm. *"I can't believe you're still there, behind those fingers!"*

These first signs of playfulness are usually interactions with adult primary caretakers, and become an exciting form of communication between two humans. Young toddlers interact best with adults who do not talk too much, but who allow learning to take place naturally.

Toddlers next begin to show interest in other toddlers. Watch two toddlers play. At first, they ignore each other completely. Each is engrossed in his own world. Yet only a few months later, they begin to become aware of each other (although they're not quite sure what to do about it), and they often play happily side by side. Still, there is no interaction (unless they both covet the same toy). They notice, but ignore, each other. However, as young children get a little older, interesting things begin to happen. Parallel play seems to become a more coordinated activity, and the awareness of what is going on beside them becomes interesting. It is exciting to watch these groupings begin to socialize. Observe these developmental stages:

- Playing near another child, but doing so separately
- Awareness of other children, finding it pleasant, but still not interacting
- Taking part in simple games
- Showing toys, or offering them to someone
- Imitating actions
- Beginning to use imaginative play

Because almost everything happening during the day becomes play to a small child, it is easy for us to plan for toddlers. There is so much for them to learn and explore. The tips on the next page may help you plan meaningful activities.

Here are a few hands-on activities that are easily planned and fun to do outdoors.

- Toddlers love to "stick things through." Cut a hole in the plastic top of a coffee can, just big enough for a small block. Let children take turns poking blocks through the lid. Change the game by varying the objects (none of them small enough to swallow), and listening to the sounds the objects make when they hit the metal bottom. Use the cans as shakers while singing a favorite song.
- A milk carton with the top cut off and old-fashioned clothespins create a game that can change as toddlers grow. For very young toddlers, simply line the clothespins around the carton top and show children how to pull them off and drop them in the carton. Sing or clap while they do so.

Older children can learn how to put the clothespins around the top, and then stand and try to "make a basket" with clothespins, by dropping them into the can. If the clothespins are painted in several primary colors, you can also work on color identification and even simple patterning activities.

- Provide a tray of sand, flour, or cornmeal for toddlers to draw designs, while they enjoy the textures of various mixtures.
- All games are fun when music is a part of them. Ask your children to hold hands in a circle, and move around and around to a favorite song. After a few repetitions, change directions, or drop hands. You can also change the activity by asking children to gallop, skip, or trot instead of walking. (This simple activity prepares the way for circle games, which are really hard for younger toddlers to understand.)

Tips for Low-Key Toddler Play

- ❒ Offer a variety of play experiences; simple games, songs, interactive stories.
- ❒ Encourage small and large group cooperative play.
- ❒ Allow periods of time for solitary play and interactions with adults.
- ❒ Encourage repetitions of playful activities. They become practice for real-life situations.
- ❒ Using dress-up clothes and role playing is a gradual process, don't rush it. Allow ample time for pretend play when children are interested.
- ❒ Plan sensory activities so that the experiences add to their knowledge of the world.
- ❒ Sharing and cooperative play are learned skills. Keep reasonable expectations.
- ❒ Offer a balance of large and fine motor activities, group and quiet activities.

● Learning to listen and follow game directions is a big step for toddlers. Understanding usually happens somewhere between the ages of two and three.

Here is a circle game for toddlers. Put a laundry basket in the center of the playground and sing the directions. (Tune: *"Pop Goes the Weasel"*).

Round and round the basket we run.
Everyone's chasing me.
Turn around and I'll chase you,
I'll catch everyone I see.

(Everyone gets to run at the same time!)

● Toddlers can "paint" easily while watching colors change and blend, when you put several colors of fingerpaint (about 1/4 cup) in a zip-locking bag that has all the air released, and tightly secure the top. (Taping makes it extra strong.) Let children take turns squeezing the bag and making designs with their fingers. Vary the activity by using only one color of paint, and setting the bag on different colors of construction paper.

If you decide to fingerpaint the normal messy way, plan a second activity by having a tub of water ready for smeary hands. Tell children to watch the colors spread and change as more colors (and hands) are dipped in the water.

IN THE HANDS OF CHILDREN

by Barbara F. Backer

Throughout life, we use our hands for writing, cutting, threading, dressing, sewing, joining items, and more. Time spent in developing strong small motor skills rewards us with coordinated movements. So incorporate small motor activities into your outside play time this summer.

Containers and Lids: Select a variety of plastic containers and their lids. Include bottles and jars as well as margarine-type tubs. Encourage children to use these containers as they explore the play yard picking up leaves, acorns, etc. Putting items in the containers requires muscle control. Putting snap-on lids on containers and screwing on jar lids and bottle tops are activities that exercise different muscles.

Tearing Paper: Children love to tear paper. Even toddlers can tear tissue paper. Provide many kinds of paper for children to tear and have grocery bags on hand for the scraps. Picking up tiny paper scraps gives fingers another workout. You can also offer child-sized brooms and rakes for cleaning up scraps that fall on the ground. Large muscles need work, too!

Pasting and Gluing: Bring large paper and paste or glue outside so children can glue down the paper scraps in a giant collage. Use the collage to decorate the door to the outside play area.

Snacktime: Children can thread O-shaped cereal onto pretzel sticks during an outdoor snacktime, then eat the tasty treat. Offer plenty of cool water or juice; let each child pour his own from a small pitcher or measuring cup.

Sand Play: Occasionally remove shovels and other digging implements from the sand area so children must dig with their hands and fingers. At other times, add water to dampen the sand and again encourage children to dig with their hands and fingers.

Add teaspoons and tablespoons to the sand area, and add small containers (like yogurt cups) for children to fill by using the spoons to scoop the sand.

Bury plastic bottle caps and seashells in the sand. Tell children to use their fingers to retrieve the hidden treasure.

Stringing Things: Wrap a bit of masking tape around the end of a piece of yarn and knot the yarn's other end around a large bead. Offer a variety of items for stringing: paper scraps with holes punched in them, cardboard tubes cut into rings; fat drinking straws cut into 1/2-inch pieces. Let children hang the completed strings on an outdoor fence for decoration. **Caution:** If children use the decorative strings as necklaces, they shouldn't wear them during active outdoor play. There is too much danger of the necklace getting caught on something as children run or slide by, choking the child.

Wringing and Twisting: Put several dishpans of water outside. Add soap to half. Give children cloth napkins, dish towels, washcloths, doll clothes and baby clothes to wash and rinse. They will squeeze and wring the fabrics.

Pinching: Provide clothespins so children can hang the wash on the fence or on wire hangers you've hung on the fence. Pinching clothespins strengthens the three fingers children will later use for pencil control.

Squeezing: Put eyedroppers or turkey basters in dishpans of water. Add a few plastic bottles for children to fill as they squeeze the bulbs on the eyedroppers and basters. In hot weather, children may use the basters to squirt each other with a stream of cooling water. The summer sun will quickly dry children.

DO WHAT I DO

by Karin-Leigh Spicer

Non-verbal communication is the way children and adults express themselves through what they do, not by what they say. A simple and effective way to introduce young learners to nonverbal communication is through fingerplays, pantomime, and facial guessing games. These types of activities are easy to do, take little time and energy and delight children with rhythm, rhyme, imagery, and humor. Leg, arm, and finger dexterity, hand-eye coordination, and attention spans can improve when children do fingerplays and pantomime. Facial guessing games teach children about emotions and the feelings of others. These are all good summer outdoor activities.

FINGERPLAYS

There are many fingerplay books available. *Finger Rhymes* by Marc Brown (Dutton), *1001 Rhymes & Fingerplays* by the Totline Staff (Warren), *Musical Games, Fingerplays and Rhythmic Activities for Early Childhood* by Marian Wirth, Verna Stassvitch, Rita Shotwell, and Patricia Stemmler (Parker), *Do Your Ears Hang Low?* by Tom Glazer (Doubleday) are just a few examples. *Creative Fingerplays & Action Rhymes* by Jeff Defty (Orx) is an excellent source for fingerplays. The author breaks the fingerplays into age categories (toddlers and preschoolers) as well as including a section for special needs children.

When first introducing a new fingerplay to young learners, speak at a slow enough rate so they can see which hand movements go with which words. Repeat at least two times so children can practice the movements. As children become adept at the fingerplays, have them create their own. Nursery rhymes or simple songs such as *"Old MacDonald"* work well.

PANTOMIMES

Ideas for pantomimes can be found in magazines and books. Select simple illustrations such as a *jump rope, bike, cat, dog, or ball* and place them on note cards. Children can take turns acting out what is on the cards and those that are watching can guess what the actions represent. Young learners can act like the illustration (a dog can scratch, lick, bite, beg, roll over) or demonstrate how the object would be used (jumping rope, riding a bike, or bouncing a ball). For example, children can pantomime *summer* by pretending to do activities they enjoy in the summer such as swimming, eating watermelon and spitting out the seeds, playing tag, running through a water sprinkler, or playing catch. After a child has completed a pantomime, ask the class if there are any other ways to demonstrate the behavior or action. For example, what else can they do with a ball? (roll, shoot, throw, or catch) This helps children expand their own non-verbal movements.

FACIAL GUESSING GAMES

Pictures for facial guessing games can be found in magazines and books or use photographs of teachers and parents demonstrating a wide range of facial expressions. Show the pictures to children and ask them to identify the expressions. How do they know the person is happy or sad? What did they see? Tears? A smile? Have children demonstrate the same facial expression. Children and adults look at a person's face to gage how that person is feeling. What do children do when they see someone sad or happy? Cheer them up? Join in the person's fun?

INSTANT CREATIVE DRAMATICS

by Mary Beth Spann Minucci

The notion of doing creative dramatics with young children can bring to mind images of oversized costumes, painted backdrops, crowns, capes, and fairy wands. But, creative dramatics with little ones can also be an easy, on-the-spot activity done without theatrical frills and with (almost) no teacher preparation.

One key to easy, creative dramatics is to become familiar with stories and rhymes designed to coax children to act out and move as you read or recite.

I stumbled on this idea quite by chance when reading bedtime books to my young daughter, Francesca. As she grew from a baby to a preschooler, Francesca began responding to different books in different ways. While some books caused her to snuggle down deep, other jaunty, repetitive selections caused her to leap spontaneously from bed and to act out the words she heard in time with the rhythm of my reading. As a parent of a child who learns best when on the move, I soon became acutely aware of how important it is for early childhood programs to recognize the need children have to "own" books through movement.

During a classroom visit to Francesca's preschool, I tried reading some of these "movement" books aloud and the response was wonderful! When invited to move to the text (rather than to sit still and be "good listeners"), children intuitively knew just what to do. They naturally acted out the words with plenty of imagination, giving me an opportunity to notice aloud how they each chose different ways to interpret the same words.

Of course, every children's book does not invite children to move and groove. The best books for creative dramatics are those that contain rhyming, repetitive language, plenty of strong, act-out-able verbs (suggesting movement) and peppy rhythms. From our experience (and straight from Francesca's bookshelf), here's a list of familiar titles that fit this genre, plus some instant movement activities for you to try. You'll notice from the list that follows that I tended to gravitate toward the same authors for a number of different selections. These authors tend to write in a style

suited to instant creative dramatics. Be sure to experiment with favorite selections and favorite authors of your own.

- *The Teddy Bear Book* by Jean Marzollo (Dial) is a book chock-full of bouncy classic teddy bear poems kids love to act out. Invite children to bring their teddy bears to school and use them as dance partners.
- *Pretend You're a Cat* by Jean Marzollo (Dial) is really a rhyme directing children to perform like different animals. The text is rich with strong, action-packed verbs. You might want to begin a chart collection of movement verbs, adding more words to the chart as you encounter them.
- *Chicka Chicka Boom! Boom!* by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault (Simon and Schuster) is the perfect book for introducing children to the alphabet by helping them "become" the alphabet. Try assigning each child a letter (by stringing small labeled index cards on yarn necklaces) and then go through the book slowly so children can consider movement possibilities for performing their parts. Then read the book through again and have each "letter" move on cue.
- *Up and Down on the Merry-Go-Round* by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault (Holt) inspires so much fun! Assemble children in a merry-go-round circle. As you read, each child will automatically perform the actions as directed. Be prepared to step into the role of the clown collecting tickets. Also, be aware of dramatically slowing and lowering your voice at the book's conclusion; children's movements will then reflect a slow motion effect, until, finally, they come to a complete halt.
- After children have become familiar with the text of *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, Jr. (Holt), divide your class into two groups, one group to call and one to respond. The call group will ask the question, "*What do you see?*" and the response group will answer by chanting and behaving like the different animals. Switch groups so the callers get a chance to respond.
- *Worms Wiggle* by David Pelham and Michael Foreman (Simon and Schuster) is based on a classic children's rhyme. This charming pop-up book begs kids to wiggle and jiggle like a variety of favorite animals.

BEATING THE SUMMER BLAHS

by Tania K. Cowling

Summer can be a real challenge—planning activities that are fun for children as well as educational. Most of the following ideas do not use television, VCRs, computers, or machines—just old fashioned fun—perfect for summer play. They are a wonderful break from the regular routine and give children a chance to work and play together as a team.

CREATE A VILLAGE

Check with appliance or department stores for extra-large cardboard cartons (ones that washers or refrigerators come in). Find a space where these can be set up like a village for a while. Mix large amounts of tempera paints and, with large brushes, let children paint the cartons to resemble houses or town businesses. Have an adult carefully cut out windows and folding doors. The windows can be decorated with scrap fabric curtains. Decorations can be found in the recycle bin.

When dry and ready, add carpet squares, pillows, and toys galore. You'd be surprised how much time children will spend in their creative village.

This is also a good time to discuss the type of building that houses certain businesses and have children role play community helpers.

BUILD A PLAYGROUND OBSTACLE COURSE

Turn your playground into a fantastic fun park by adding a few household items. Remember that children like to crawl, jump, climb, and balance—so plan the stations accordingly.

Here are a few ideas: board propped about a foot off the ground to "walk the plank," old tires to jump into or crawl through, wooden sawhorses or tables to slither under, and, if it's warm and children are in swimsuits, wading pools to wade across.

Make sure you provide supervision. The object of this course is for children to have fun during all the events at their own speed.

PUBLISH A CLASS NEWSPAPER

Children can "write" or dictate articles to contribute to the newspaper. Topics can be assigned or children can "write" about their favorite subject. Interviews are fun as children ask each other questions such as: *"What's your favorite TV show?"* or *"Do you have a special pet?"* They can dictate a story about their interview experience.

You can either print the copy or type the newspaper if you have the equipment. Don't forget children's illustrations.

Photocopy the pages and staple them together. Distribute a paper to each child and don't forget to keep a class copy. Try to publish several editions throughout the summer.

IT'S EVERYONE'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

Have a gigantic birthday party for all children to enjoy. Look around the classroom for decorated cups, plates, balloons, decorations, and games left over from other parties. Decorate even your simplest snack with sprinkles for a party effect or ask for help with the refreshments from willing parents. In advance, create artful invitations. Tell children to invite their favorite doll or stuffed animal to the party (cuts down on real children to feed, but adds excitement with these inanimate friends sitting around the table on individual chairs).

This is a wonderful way for all children to feel special—it's everyone's birthday at this party. Laugh, sing, and enjoy the celebration.

PLANT A GARDEN

If your school can provide a small patch of land, try planting

a garden. Children love to dig in the earth, get dirty, and summer's a good time to experience this fun. It all washes off, too!

Gardens provide valuable lessons on how plants grow. Supply seeds or small plants and toy shovels (even large spoons will work) to dig. Try vegetables and pretty flowers. Explain to children that gardens need care daily—water and weeding. This is definitely a fun and rewarding class project. In due time, you might be able to sample a vegetable snack or pick flowers to surround the classroom with beauty.

CREATE A MOVIE THEATER

With children's videos so readily available, set up a movie on a rainy day. Line up chairs or carpet squares in rows including a center aisle. Make a batch of popcorn and serve it in large paper cups. Prior to the showing, think of making a bulletin board marquee and cut out paper tickets for authenticity.

HOLD A PUPPET SHOW

Use one of the large cartons from your village and convert it into a puppet theater. Have an entrance door from the side or back. Most important is the large window for the stage. Add a curtain above the window and you have a puppet theater. Another theater could be made by draping fabric on an overturned table or tacking a sheet across a doorway.

Supply puppets in the classroom or get children involved in making their own creations from lunch bags, paper cups, small boxes, socks, and so on.

DESIGN YOUR OWN T-SHIRT

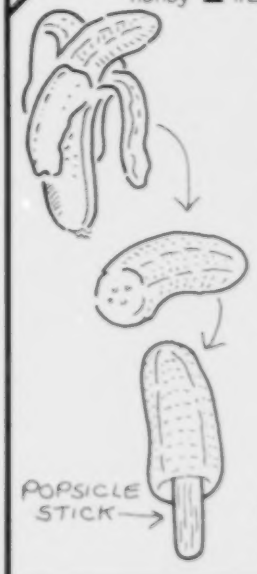
Have each child bring in an old light colored T-shirt. Provide fabric paints, fabric crayons, faux jewels, sequins, and any other kinds of trim that can be glued on. Use only washable fabric glue. Let children get creative with their designs and then when finished, hold a fashion show to share each other's wearable art.

MAKE A "YUMMY SNACK"

CHOCOLATE BANANA POPS

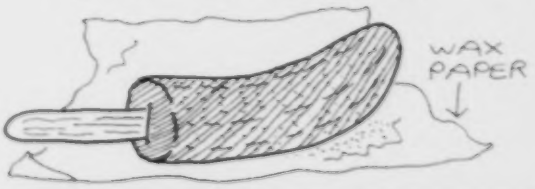
(makes four banana pops—you alter the recipe to fit the needs of your class)

YOU'LL NEED: 4 popsicle sticks ▲ 3 Tablespoons cocoa ▲ 2 bananas ▲ 1 Tablespoon milk ▲ 2 Tablespoons honey ▲ 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract



WHAT TO DO:

1. Mix the honey, cocoa, milk, and vanilla on a plate. Stir the mixture until it's smooth.
2. Peel the bananas and cut them in half.
3. Push a popsicle stick into each cut end.
4. Roll the banana halves in the cocoa and honey mixture until they are completely covered.
5. Place the bananas on a sheet of wax paper.
6. Freeze them overnight. If you can't wait that long, freeze them for at least 3 hours.



EXPLORE SUMMER WEATHER

by Susan G. Mills

Summer is the ultimate weather laboratory. All kinds of weather can happen. Thunderstorms can crop up in minutes, blast through the area, and be gone. The early morning dew soaks your toes. But how does weather happen?

The sun controls our weather patterns. Its heat changes the air temperature. These changes impact the amount of moisture in the air. It is the moisture in the air that creates the weather patterns that we see. The moisture becomes rain, snow, sleet, hail, fog, clouds, and dew.

The song, "The Eency Weency Spider" describes the water cycle perfectly. Water warms and evaporates, then cools, condenses, and becomes water again.

THE EENCY WEENCY SPIDER *(Traditional)*

The eency weency spider
went up the water spout,
Down came the rain and
washed the spider out.
Out came the sun and dried
up all the rain,
And the eency weency spider
went up the spout again.

Set up a weather-watching station in your class. Decorate the area with posters, children's artwork, and weather charts. Display some books about weather and make graphs to document the weather in your area. Prepare an "experiment of the day" to discover how weather happens. (See the suggestions on the next page.) Invite a weather forecaster to visit and talk about how meteorologists forecast the weather.

CLOUDY DAYS

Clouds are divided into three main groups: stratus, cumulus, and cirrus. *Stratus* means "layer." These clouds form sheetlike layers of gray or white in the sky. *Cumulus* means "pile." These clouds look like round puffy piles of cotton. *Cirrus* means "curl," and these clouds are the wispy curls that are high in the sky on clear days. Cumulus and stratus clouds produce rain; cirrus clouds do not.

- Observe clouds each day. What kinds of clouds are they?
- Describe them and keep a chart of your observations.
- Write poems about clouds.

WIND

Wind is air that is moving. We can't see it, but we can see its effect on things around it. We can feel the wind blowing on our bodies.

- Make sailboats.
- Make pinwheels.
- Use yarn to make wind indicators. Have children hold them or tie them to a fence. Which way is the air moving?

RAIN

Thunderstorms are often frightening to children. Talk about how you feel during a thunderstorm. Make a class book sharing children's experiences. Make a chart to find out how many storms occur in a week.

This summer, learn all about the weather. It is amazing to think that all the water that exists today has always been in our atmosphere. It recycles from Earth to air and back to Earth again—just like in the song about the little spider.

BOOKS TO EXPLORE:

- *Flash, Crash, Rumble, and Roll* by Franklin M. Branley (Crowell)
- *Feel the Wind* by Arthur Dorros (Crowell)
- *A Rainy Day* by Sandra Markle (Orchard Books,)
- *Rain, Rain, Rivers* by Uri Shulevitz (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

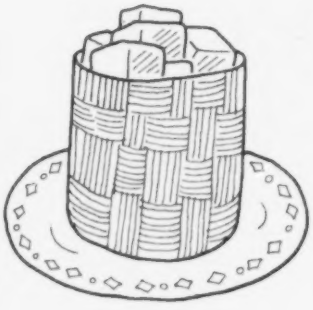
EXPERIMENTS

Evaporation

▲ Fill jars with water. Mark the water level with masking tape. Put the jars in different areas of the classroom. Check the jars every day. What is happening to the water?

▲ Outside, use paintbrushes or spray bottles to paint on the wall, sidewalk, or driveway. What happens to the water?

Condensation



▲ Cut the ends off a small metal can, and remove the label. Place the can on a flat dish. Fill the can with ice cubes. What happens to the outside of the can? (The air temperature in the room is warmer than the side of the can. The water vapor near the metal cools, and changes to water.)

▲ Make rain. (ADULT ONLY!) Heat a pot of water on the stove. Then hold a large frying pan about one foot over the pot. The water vapor will form rain as it hits the cool bottom of the pan. As the drops get heavy, they will fall like rain.

▲ Make fog. (ADULT ONLY!) Fill a bottle with hot, NOT boiling, water. Hold a pan filled with ice over the bottle. The warm air rises from the bottle and hits the bottom of the cold pan. The water vapor cools, forming fog.

POWER PICNICS

by Jeannine Perez

I've planned many picnics with my classes; park picnics, parent picnics, January picnics on the classroom floor, get-acquainted picnics, and farewell picnics. Some of our most successful picnics happen in the very playground the children know so well. Still, we incorporate adventure, good times, and good food into our picnics that push out the boundaries of playground fences.

A BEAR PICNIC

Children always help prepare our picnic snack. Our bear picnic was simple; juice in a thermos, peanut butter sandwiches on wheat bread cut into triangles, sliced apples, and, of course, teddy bear crackers.

We left after mid-morning group time. Re-telling the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears set the stage. Everyone packed and carried their own lunch in a brown bag, and I carried a blanket, moist wipes, the thermos, and paper cups in my backpack.

I'd done a little prep work, and cautioned children that we would be exploring new and strange territory, and that they would need to use their eyes and ears. Then I showed them a map I'd drawn with black marker on crumpled brown paper. Suddenly our classroom changed, and, as brave explorers, we lined up to slowly wind our way around table mountains, through hallway canyons and open meadows, and finally into a dense forest. To keep up our courage, we sang: *"A hunting we will go. A hunting we will go. We'll catch a bear and comb his hair, and then we'll let him go."* Carefully we wound our way through forest paths, rested in a clearing, and then moved on. Because the forest was so dense, I pulled a rope from my backpack and we all grabbed it to be sure that no one got lost.

Then it happened! Behind a tree (chair), we spied our first bear! (a teddy bear) What to do? A little voice at the end of the rope, suggested shakily that perhaps we could invite him to join our picnic. And so we did! He rode on my shoulders as we moved along. Proceeding up another mountain into the sun and fresh air, we searched for a place to stop and eat, and found the perfect spot under a tree. I spread the blanket and we sat down to eat. We began to talk about our surroundings; what we saw, smelled, touched, and heard. Children saw and heard things that they'd never noticed in the play yard before. After eating, we carefully packed our leftovers, and looked around for other litter to pick up. *Wherever we go, we try to leave the place in the same shape that it was when we arrived.*

RECIPES TO TRY

Sandwiches beyond peanut butter:

Try combinations (ask children to vote on them). You might mix peanut butter with a little marshmallow cream (or spread a layer of each on bread), mashed banana, jelly, or applesauce. You can also mix sesame seeds or sunflower seeds with peanut butter, using a little honey to help mix it well. Try cream cheese mixed with a little jelly or mashed fruit for flavor and color. Use several kinds of bread, cut into fancy shapes, or cut the centers out of the top bread.

Plan nutritious drinks:

Orange Giggle Juice is also a favorite if we are not traveling far. In a thermos, pour 3 cups ready-to-drink orange juice or drink. Add 1/2 cup frozen yogurt (you can also use plain yogurt and a few tablespoons of sugar). When you are ready to serve, ask children to pass the thermos around the blanket, each child shaking it 5 times.

Mix fruit juices for delicious combinations. Sometimes freeze ice cubes made from orange or pineapple juice and put them in a thermos of mixed fruit juice.

Cookies are welcome treats:

Cookies on a stick (We make these the day before the picnic.)

You'll Need: 2 1/2 cups unbleached flour ◆ 1/4 teaspoon salt ◆ 3/4 cup sugar ◆ 1 teaspoon baking soda ◆ 1 cup butter or margarine softened ◆ 3/4 cup brown sugar ◆ 2 eggs ◆ 1 cup chopped nuts (we substituted 1/3 cup crunchy cereal)—optional ◆ 1 small bag chocolate chips—optional ◆ popsicle sticks

What to Do: Mix all ingredients in order given, ending with nuts and chocolate chips (which are optional). Drop by tablespoons onto an ungreased cookie sheet, flatten, and push a popsicle stick into the side of each cookie. Bake at 350 degrees for about 11 minutes. Remove from cookie sheet to paper towels to cool.

PICNIC BASICS

Your picnics may be very different from the one described above. But all picnics can have a sense of adventure and good will. The following tips help you keep picnics fun, stress-free for teachers, and safe for everyone.

- Plan and pack ahead. Remember tissues, wipes, bandages, something to sit upon, and some place to eat. I also take emergency cards, a quarter for a phone call, a camera, and a good book to share.
- Food should simple and easily prepared by children. I do not like to worry about food spoilage, and so, seldom take anything with meat or eggs. I also try not to include foods that are excessively salty. Finger foods can include fresh veggies, crackers, cheese cubes, and fruits.
- Food can be carried by you in a basket, bucket, or backpack by children or in individual bags or boxes. Once, when we were not traveling far, each child packed her own finger foods in the compartments of an egg carton.
- It often works well to have one blanket for food, and another one or two to sit on. Small children invariably crowd to the middle of a blanket of food, and it is discouraging to have someone sitting on the bananas!
- Talk about your planned picnic before you leave, so that children have the excitement of anticipation and feel a part of the planning.
- Think beyond the parameters of noon meals and predictable places. One of our best picnics happened early in the morning, when the world was fresh and new. We invited parents, and met in a park to share hot chocolate, rolls, orange juice, and oatmeal bread toasted in a grill. We decided that the world is a different place at dawn.

RAINY DAY TECHNOLOGY

by Evelyn Woldman

Summertime....and the livin' is easy! We all know the tune. But around the second week of summer, there is that first rainy day when our youngsters peer out the window and say, *"What do we do today?"*

This is a great time to get kids "hooked on" the computer with some wonderful, easy-to-use, entertaining, yet educational early childhood software. Let's take a quick look at a potpourri of good learning material. The key is: easy-to-use, fun to play, but always with solid "learning" agendas!

Thinkin' Things 1, 2, or 3 (Edmark Corporation)
These pieces have taken a proud place on bookshelves as classic problem solving, logic building gems! The most appropriate piece for the young learner is *Thinkin' Things 1. Versions 2 and 3* are geared for the elementary to middle school set. But, don't be surprised if one of your pre-schoolers plays with the other two versions with equal dexterity!

Reading Magic Library (Tom Snyder Productions)
There are several titles in this series, such as *Jack and the Beanstalk, Fizz and Martina in Tough Krudd, and Flodd the Bad Guy*. Each program takes children through the story sequentially; the fun comes in when, at several points, the child must make a decision which way the storyline must go. It is this feature which makes this a worthwhile trip to the computer. The child can virtually make up hundreds of different story lines, depending on the decisions she makes. Tom Snyder affectionately refers to this series as "lapware"—he expects that a child should read these stories on the *lap* of a caring adult!

Living Books Series (Broderbund Software)
This series of interactive stories has also taken its place as a set of young people's software. The possibilities seem neverending, as you "turn the page" on your screen, and interact with every possible character and object from the pages of real literature. The humor that has been imbedded in these programs reminds me very much of the reason that Sesame Street has been so successful for so long—it can be appreciated on many levels, from early childhood to adult! Current titles include: *Just Grandma and Me, Little Monster at School* (Mercer Mayer); *Arthur's Teacher Trouble, Arthur's Birthday* (Mark Brown); *Tortoise and the Hare*; and more...

Kid Pix 2 (Broderbund)
This program is always full of surprises and multiple levels of fun things to do! It includes a talking alphabet (in English and Spanish), hundreds of colorful rubber stamps that can be customized and resized, palette upon palette of brushes, colors, and designs, and lots of hidden pictures! Children can draw, create slide shows, color —all without reading a word!
** A wonderful spin-off to this program is **Kid Cuts,** also by Broderbund. This program is totally project based. Young artists can choose from things like hats, animals, masks, rainy day projects, and lots more. The projects give the creator plenty of choices for customization.

The Playroom, The Treehouse, The Backyard (Broderbund Software) Each of these programs offers youngsters an exploratory environment where almost anything they click on has an effect—sometimes a sound, sometimes an action, sometimes the opening up of a game! Youngsters never seem to tire of the possibilities . **The Playroom** is geared for the youngest computer users (ages 2-5). The others can be accessed easily by age 4 or 5.

IT'S TOO HOT TO GO OUTSIDE!

by Karen Stephens

Summer temperatures in the 70's and low 80's are delightful, just perfect for outside play. Add a breeze and some bird songs, and children will thrive on the outdoor learning opportunities that summer provides.

But on some days, summer heat indexes are just too high for outdoor activities. In extreme heat and humidity, children and adults risk heat exhaustion, or even heat stroke. Play yards that don't offer shade can contribute to skin cancer. Play yards located on the top of city buildings, or covered mostly with concrete and asphalt, contribute to uncomfortable temperatures that are at worst dangerous, and at best, really uncomfortable.

The wise teacher keeps a supply of "emergency" activities on hand. Children can enjoy these experiences inside when the outside summer weather is inhospitable (intolerable!) to humans.

I hope most of your days are cool, crisp, and clear, but just in case they aren't the following are indoor activities to keep your kids busy learning and having fun—despite the outside heat.

LARGE MOTOR ACTIVITIES

Bring out the parachutes. Move the furniture from the middle of the classroom and bring out a parachute. (A sheet can be used if you don't own a circular nylon parachute.)

Things to do with the parachute:

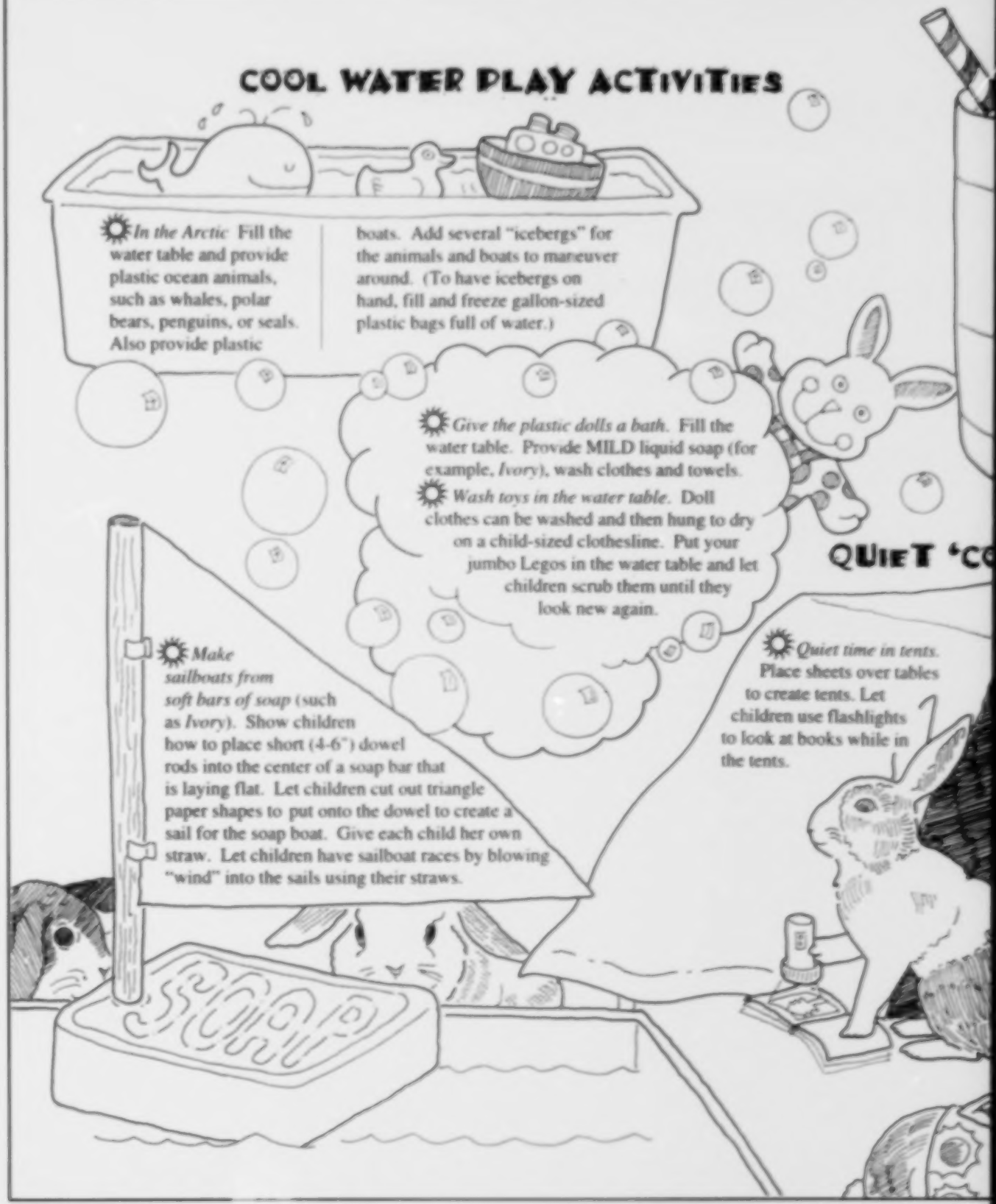
- Have children hold onto all outside edges of the parachute and pull the parachute taut. Toss Nerf balls, ping pong balls, or whiffle balls into the middle of the parachute and tell children to make those balls dance!
- While in a circle around the parachute, have children lift the chute high above their heads. Call out two children's names who then run under the parachute to trade places.
- Play Ring-Around-the-Rosy while holding onto the parachute. Play it going forwards, then backwards.

Fan dance with scarves and streamers. Place one or more fans in a large open area. Give children scarves and streamers. Point fans at children and let them dance "in the wind." (For greater safety, you can place fans on tables and put colored tape on the floor marking a line children must stay behind so they don't get too close to the fan. Make sure fans have safety guards that don't allow fingers or hands to touch fan blades.)

Bring out beanbags and small balls. Let children pick partners to play games of toss. Provide laundry baskets, boxes, or large coffee cans to play target games. Cut large shapes into the side of a cardboard box so children can aim for shapes.

Bring out the plastic bowling set. While "teams" of children bowl, other students can be cheerleaders for the teams.

COOL WATER PLAY ACTIVITIES



In the Arctic. Fill the water table and provide plastic ocean animals, such as whales, polar bears, penguins, or seals. Also provide plastic boats. Add several "icebergs" for the animals and boats to maneuver around. (To have icebergs on hand, fill and freeze gallon-sized plastic bags full of water.)

Give the plastic dolls a bath. Fill the water table. Provide MILD liquid soap (for example, *Ivory*), wash clothes and towels.

Wash toys in the water table. Doll clothes can be washed and then hung to dry on a child-sized clothesline. Put your jumbo Legos in the water table and let children scrub them until they look new again.

Make sailboats from soft bars of soap (such as *Ivory*). Show children how to place short (4-6") dowel rods into the center of a soap bar that is laying flat. Let children cut out triangle paper shapes to put onto the dowel to create a sail for the soap boat. Give each child her own straw. Let children have sailboat races by blowing "wind" into the sails using their straws.

Quiet time in tents. Place sheets over tables to create tents. Let children use flashlights to look at books while in the tents.

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COOL COOKING IDEAS

Make fruit ambrosia. Mix any assortment of bite-sized fresh fruits with coconut and crushed pineapple. (Coconut can be omitted.)

Make frosty milkshakes. Use a blender to make different flavors. (Which flavor is the most popular?)

Make jello. Use 100% fruit juice and Knox gelatin.

Make a fruit pizza! Purchase already prepared sugar cookie dough. Spread the dough on a 12" round pizza pan. Bake per directions on dough package. When cooled, let children spread soft cream cheese onto the baked cookie dough. Let children slice, and put a variety of delicious fruits onto the cream cheese. Suggestions: fresh blueberries, strawberries, bananas, kiwis, and sliced grapes.

Make 100% fruit juice popsicles. Pour juice into paper cups. When partially frozen, let children insert popsicle sticks into cups for handles.

OL DOWN' ACTIVITIES

Play "sound" hide and seek. Ask children to wait outside the classroom with an aide. Then hide an item that makes a quiet noise such as a ticking timer, tape cassette playing music, or small music box. When item is hidden, have children come back in to find the hidden object by tracking down its sound.

Take group surveys and create graphs and/or charts. Survey: Who likes summer? Who doesn't? What are the favorite summer water activities: water slide, sprinkler, or pool? Where is the most popular summer drink: water, juice, milk?

Create a language chart. With a group of children dictating to you, list all the ways they can think of to keep cool on a hot summer day.

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Summer Fun Indoors

COOL ART ACTIVITIES

Paint with ice cubes! Provide children with dry tempera and paper (newsprint or construction paper). Fill salt shakers with a variety of colors of dry tempera paint. (Or children can sprinkle paint on paper using spoons.) Give each child an ice cube. Have children paint by moving ice through the dry tempera. As the cube melts, it liquefies the paint and creates a design. (If children's hands get too cold, provide mittens.)

Spray bottle painting. There are two ways (and probably more) of painting with spray bottles.

- Fill spray bottles with colored water. Let children spray different colors onto newsprint that is hung on the easel, placed on a table top, or laid on the floor.
- Have children lightly sprinkle dry tempera paint all over the surface of paper. Let them spray water onto the tempera using the spray bottles.

Make summertime collages with glue and construction paper! Use any of the following for collage themes: summer clothes, summer toys, picnic foods, summer sports, cool summer activities, summer gardens, summer birds, and so on.

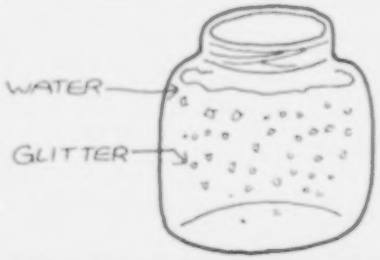
WINTER IN A JAR

by Hillary Dixler

You'll Need: empty baby food jar or other small jar with lid
▲ plasticine ▲ glitter ▲ electrical tape

What to Do:

1. Wash empty food jar and lid thoroughly and dry.
2. Mold a small figure from plasticine and secure onto the inside of the jar lid.
3. Fill jar 3/4 of the way with water.
4. Add glitter.
5. Put lid on the jar. Wrap tape tightly around the lid and jar to prevent leaks.
6. Turn upside down and shake.



ICE CUBE AND FROZEN FUN

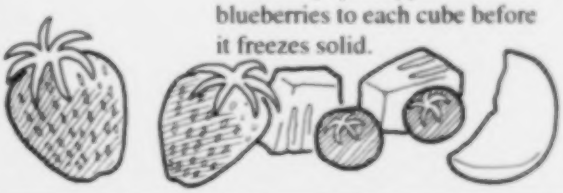
by Kathy Faggella

Here are activities that use ice cubes or the freezer. Summer is the perfect time for these fun recipes and activites because "cold" anything is appreciated on hot, sweltering days. Also messes are easier to clean up if you work outside.

Fancy Ice Cubes

Freeze water in ice cube trays.

Add a cherry, peach slice, strawberry, pineapple chunk, or blueberries to each cube before it freezes solid.

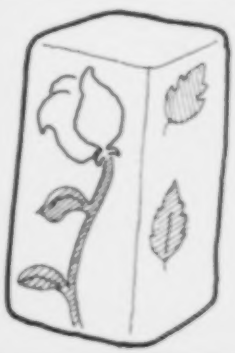


Ice Cups

Fill paper cups almost full with water. Freeze 1- 1 1/2 hours or until cup is frozen all around edges. Break open the top. Drain out water. Remove from paper cup. Fill with juice. Use immediately.

Frozen Chocolate-sicles

Pour chocolate milk into paper cups, partially freeze and add plastic spoon. Tear away paper cup to eat.



Ice Block

Make a decorative ice block. Use it as a centerpiece.

Boil and cool about 1/2 gallon of water. (Boiling water freezes clear.) Pour water into a paper 1/2 gallon milk carton about 1/2 full. Freeze until almost firm.

Remove from freezer and place roses, lillies, mint sprigs, etc. into partially frozen ice. Peel away carton to use.

SPLISH SPLASH!

by Susan M. Root

Children and water are a natural mix during the hot days of the summer. Move your water table outside or provide a large basin to get your water play activities started. Begin by providing some props. Items including plastic containers, spoons, measuring cups, funnels, plastic tubes, water wheels, watering cans, plastic action figures, small droppers, spray or squirt bottles, and sponges or paint brushes increase imagination and fun. Remember to change these items over time to help children maintain interest and encourage them to make new explorations.

Developing Concepts with the Vocabuary of Water

full/empty	as much as
sink/float	the same as
large/small	more than
wet/dry	less than
high/low	counting
big/little	measuring
fast/slow	

You can help children use new words to describe what they are doing in the water table. Comment on their actions using the concept words in the box and you will soon hear them using these words themselves.

- Water drop races could be set up in a quiet area indoors or outdoors. Place cookie sheets covered with a layer of waxed paper near the water table so that the cookie sheets are propped at an angle. Let children experiment with eye droppers to see how many drops of water it takes before the droplet will roll down the "slide." Place the cookie sheets at different angles and compare the results.
- Not all of the water has to stay in the water table. Encourage children to make observations as they "paint" sidewalks, climbers, and plastic vehicles with water. What happens to the "paint"? Compare the look and feel of the wet and dry surfaces. How long does it take for something to dry? Can you find places to paint where it takes a longer time to dry? (perhaps in the shade) Large brushes are great for painting bodies with water, so plan for children to wear bathing suits or shorts. Most will enjoy the sensory experience as different

textures touch their bodies.

Squirt bottles can also be used for target practice. Set up empty soda bottles or half-gallon milk jugs and try to knock them over with a stream of water. Older children can record the number knocked down within a certain time period.

When children are ready for a change of pace, you can add some soap and make a wash-and-dry center. You might allow them to wash the doll clothes or toy dishes and find ways to use them. What is the difference between things that are hung up and those lying flat? Again, comparisons of wet and dry and length of drying time will have children doing lots of observation. What about a car and truck wash for the sandbox toys or riding vehicles? Children can make a list of equipment they will need and help gather the necessary supplies.

Children are developing fundamental concepts in math about quantity and volume whenever they play and explore with water. Science processes such as observing, comparing, classifying, measuring, and predicting become part of their activities in a relaxing and fun activity. Best of all, children often find new ways of cooperating as they engage in these water activities.

GOOP

This activity can be messy and is a great one to do outdoors where cleanup is easy. Children enjoy exploring this mysterious material.

You'll Need: cornstarch ▲ water ▲ food coloring (optional)

What to Do:

1. Mix equal parts of cornstarch and water in a container. (Food coloring can be added.)
2. Carefully, pick up a handful and shape it into a ball. It will hold its shape for a short time and then ooze through your fingers.
3. When the goop becomes too dry, just add a little more water.

SCIENCE AT THE WATER TABLE

by Sherry Burrell

When is it too early to introduce "the scientific method" to children? Never! From early on, when you encourage children to show curiosity about the world around them, you are actually inspiring those children to become junior scientists!

When you encourage children to "wonder" (formulate questions), make "guesses" (predict or make a hypothesis), "try out their ideas" (carry out an experiment), "use their senses" (make observations), "draw or tell what happened" (record and report data), or "tell why they think this happened" (draw conclusions), you are teaching them to use "the scientific method." It is NOT important to use scientific terminology. It is much more important for children to learn to love the process!

"WHAT HAPPENS IF...?"

There are so many simple experiments to do with young children! Remember that young children don't "know" what will happen under the simplest of conditions! Offer children the opportunity to wonder about things WITHOUT telling them what is obvious to the adult world. LET THE CHILDREN WONDER!

A key component to this type of science program is the support and understanding of the parents in your school community. When parents are aware of and involved in the "scientific method" approach in your science program, they won't sabotage it by simply "telling their children the answers" to the scientific questions your class creates. The following experiment is a simple one to do with your children. The best experiments will be the ones that come from the children themselves!

EXPERIMENT: WILL IT SINK OR WILL IT FLOAT?

- **Pre-Teach Vocabulary**: Collect a few objects from around your school, such as a wooden block, a spoon, an apple, a stick, a crayon, and some pebbles and stones. Teach children what the word "sink" means by demonstrating with one object that immediately falls to the bottom of the water table or basin. Similarly, teach them the concept of "float." Say nothing about WHY things sink or float. Say nothing about what kinds of objects sink and what kinds float.
- **Wonder and Guess**: Ask children why they think some objects sink and others float. Accept all ideas as "wonderful guesses"! Help children choose one of the ideas to "test out." For example, one child might guess that big things sink and small things float. Another child might say that heavy things sink and light things float. Another child might say that heavy things sink and small things float. Have children choose one idea at a time to "Test the Guess" (the scientific term would be (CHECK THE HYPOTHESIS).
- **Get Ready to Try Out the Guess**: To prepare to "test a guess," help children make a chart showing the two types of categories they are going to try out. Have children search the school for items they could try out, and help them to list these objects on a big chart by drawing and/or writing them. Be sure to list items only under one category at a time (a hammer is big for one test; a hammer is heavy for another test). Be sure that lists are created by the children. Your job here is to veto the testing of objects that will be ruined by getting wet! As objects are accepted for testing, list them, and place them into two separate boxes. Each box will be labeled (with a drawing too): "We think that all big things will sink," and the other will say, "We think that all small things will float."

SINK	FLOAT
bolt	cotton ball
pebble	feather
hammer	

⚠ **Try It Out and Watch What Happens** (CARRYING OUT THE EXPERIMENT AND COLLECTING DATA): Have children take turns trying out each item in the water table (or in a large pail of water). As each item is "tested," have children tell or draw what actually happened to it, and record it as a class on a large chart. Have children place the objects into two new piles: those objects that SINK, and those that FLOAT. Avoid telling children why they are getting these results! Teachers who wonder and are "amazed right along with children, inspire those children to think, draw conclusions, and wonder anew!

⚠ **Tell What Happened and Report It** (DRAW CONCLUSIONS AND HYPOTHESIZE): Encourage children to look carefully at the two new piles. Ask them to express what they thought would happen, and what actually happened. Helping children to formulate these two statements is a valuable beginning for their scientific thinking! Have them decide if their first "Guess" (HYPOTHESIS) turned out to be "right"/"true"/"supported," or "wrong"/"false"/"unsupported." show excitement over their results! Help children see that every experiment teaches them something wonderful. Now they know something they didn't know before! They now know that size doesn't tell if something can sink or float! That is an amazing discovery! Help children to write an "experience story" or even a "parent newsletter article" to report their amazing findings!

⚠ **Guess Again!** (Test out a NEW HYPOTHESIS): Start over again! Encourage children to create a new guess as to what kinds of groupings of objects will sink or float. Keep at it until children either discover what the scientific community already knows, or until they are tired of this particular question. Then move on to another experiment such as water or heat absorption.

THE READING TREE

by Barbara Fischer

Lazy summer days sometimes become busy days. Young children tire easily during active outdoor adventures when the weather is warm. They need a quiet time in their day—a time to relax and unwind, a time to sit in the shade of a tree with a good story. No tree? Make your own in your classroom and watch learning grow as minds and bodies renew.

Use this quiet time for a rich language arts experience. Invite children to help construct a large "tree" for a corner of your classroom. Paint a brown tree trunk on a long sheet of paper and attach this to a corner wall or bulletin board. Large hanging branches can be made from paper towel rolls taped together and painted brown. Tape these to the top part of the tree. Provide paper for children to cut green leaves to glue to the branches. Place a table or large box under the tree to display the books of one author each week.

As children experience quiet time activities under the Reading Tree, they will begin to understand that real people write and illustrate the books that they enjoy. Focus their attention on the art and themes in these books. They will soon discover that they too can use the same techniques to create their own art. Let's begin!

FRANK ASCH

Sit in the "shade" of the Reading Tree and introduce your children to the adventures of Little Bear. Display *Mooncake, Happy Birthday Moon,* and *Bear Shadow* (all published by Simon and Schuster). As you read these books, note that the main character remains the same in each book. During the week, invite children to enjoy some of the following activities.

- *Mooncake* Introduce a discussion of hibernation and why some animals do this in the winter.

Construct rocket ships from toilet paper tubes and paint. If your rocket ship actually went to the moon, what would you see there? Bring out chart paper for children to make up another adventure for Little Bear. Invite them to illustrate their story.

- *Happy Birthday, Moon* Demonstrate how the earth and moon rotate using a globe, flashlight, and a small ball. Encourage children to watch the moon during the week to note its location in the sky each night.

What kinds of birthday presents would children give to the moon? Draw a large birthday cake and ask children to decorate it with their presents for the moon.

- *Bear Shadow* Make bear shadow puppets for your own shadow puppet performance. Play shadow tag when the sun shines into your room. Flashlight tag is fun too; just use the beam in place of the sun.

ERIC CARLE

Display *Draw Me a Star* (Philomel), *A House for Hermit Crab* (Picture Book Studio) and *The Secret Birthday Message* (HarperCollins) to introduce children to this author and his art.

- *Draw Me a Star* Take time to discover the many art experiences in the books of Eric Carle. Ask children to find where tempera paint, brush strokes, fingerpaint, and tissue paper pieces were used. What shapes do you see in the star? What is used to paint the rainbow? Can you find where Carle used crayon on this page? (the rain)

Try making your own colored tissue paper, just as Carle does. Use different-sized brushes to splash, spatter, and fingerpaint on white tissue paper. (Thin white paper might work better for young children.) When the paper is dry, cut fun shapes to glue on a large sheet of paper. Add dots and splashes of paint for a finishing touch. Have fun experimenting with your own art.

- *A House for Hermit Crab*

Invite children to compare and contrast the art in *Draw Me a Star* and *A House for Hermit Crab*. How do you think Carle made the glow around the lantern fish? Try this stamping motion with a brush to make your own glowing fish, stars, or creatures. Paint an ocean mural using some of the fish from the story. Add some fancy houses for Hermit Crab.

- *The Secret Birthday Message* Play with shapes in this book. Can children identify them? Have paper cut into similar shapes to encourage children to put them together to create their own "shape story." Suggest that several children write a secret message for the others to follow. Plan a surprise, perhaps some stickers, to be found at the end. Everyone can enjoy the prize.

LEO LIONNI

Time for a change as you place *Swimmy* (Knopf), *Fish Is Fish* (Knopf), *Pezzettino* (Pantheon), and *Let's Make Rabbits* (Pantheon) on display. In addition to their creative artwork, these books have a common theme: be happy with who you are. This self esteem builder can be woven into the weekly activities.

- *Swimmy* As you read *Swimmy*, enjoy the watercolor art. Compare the art to *A House for Hermit Crab*. What is the same? Different?

Play a "Swimmy " game. Each child takes a small piece of torn red paper; one child has a small black paper. Try placing the pieces together to form a giant fish with the black piece as the eye. This activity could begin a discussion about working together.

- *Fish Is Fish* Add a little science this week. If there are any tadpoles in your area, summer fun might include watching one become a frog or recording the process with pictures. Add some land to your ocean mural for a few watercolor frogs to sun themselves.
- *Pezzettino* Show children the difference between a pattern and a design. Cut small squares of colored paper similar to those in the book. Invite children to arrange the squares in a repeated pattern first and then in a random design. Let them create their own character with paintbrush dots just as Leo Lionni did in this book. Try another art technique to create water just as the author did in *Pezzettino* by adding oil-based paint to water. Place a sheet of paper on top of the water. Gently lift up the paper to see your design. When dry, you might invite children to paint a picture to cut out and glue on the "water."
- *Let's Make Rabbits* Take out your wallpaper scraps and let children make a field of rabbits of their own design. Add a few pencil rabbits. Ask children what their rabbits are doing; add their comments to their art work.

LAURA JOFFE NUMEROFF

The last two books under the Reading Tree are about two delightful animals. Enjoy the humor of these two stories.

- *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* and *If You Give Moose a Muffin* (both HarperCollins) While you read these books, see if children can guess what comes next. Pair children together to work on their own funny stories. Ask one child to dictate the words and the other to draw the pictures. Read their books at circle time. Find several unrelated pictures, line them up, and ask children to make up a silly story using the pictures in the same order.

End your time under the Reading Tree with a "picnic." Spread a cloth under the tree and bring out all the books you have read.

IN THE BOOK CORNER

BOOKS FOR SUMMER

by Karel Kilimnik

Summer is a congenial season as well as a time for relaxing and slowing down a bit. You finally see your neighbors (two-legged, four-legged, and many more-legged), smell barbecues, and get to enjoy the sunshine.

Carol Lerner has written an interesting guide for beginning bird watchers. *Backyard Birds of Summer* (Morrow) provides an excellent introduction that examines environmental issues as they affect bird populations, the season's impact on birds as well as a few tips on how to attract birds.

Lerner provides information about each bird along with a map showing each species' summer range. The book concludes with a section entitled "Attracting Birds to Your Yard." The book is useful for both young children and adults trying to learn how to identify birds.

Look down and discover a world full of pebbles. *On My Beach There Are Many Animals* by Leo Lionni (Mulberry Books) is a gem I recently discovered. Lionni's uncluttered text matches the gray/off-white drawings perfectly. He makes you want to examine every pebble on the beach to find similar images—number pebbles, people pebbles, letter pebbles. You will never again be able to blithely step over beach pebbles without looking at them. It's a wonderful eye-opener for children to discover images "hidden" in little stones. Start a class collection or take a sketch book with you on your explorations. Either draw what you find or show children how to make rubbings to put into a class display.

As day turns to night, Lily sets out from her house nestled in the fields. She takes her purple notepad and pencil to "gather the letters in my backyard friends write telling me about their day." The inspiration for *Night Letters* by Palmyra LoMonaco (Dutton) came from a preschooler who asked Ms. LoMonaco to read a rain streaked piece of paper.

What a wonderful way to explore nature and the lives of creatures! Lily reads messages from the Ant Family, the old sycamore tree in her backyard, and even a note from a crack in a rock.

Hermit Crab takes an extended walk to find a new home. Spend a day at the beach observing wildlife. See if you can find any crabs (land or water) out and about. *Moving Day* by Robert Kalan (Greenwillow) opens up mathematical conversations as Hermit Crab searches for his just-right home. He finds shells that are too big, too small, too heavy, too light, too long, and too wide. Talk about size and measurement. What can you use to measure?

Dakari Hru blends a little bit of Africa into *The Magic Moonberry Jump Rope* (Dial Books for Young Readers). This is a wonderful story of two African-American sisters getting a little frustrated as they try to relax on their summer vacation. In steps their Uncle Zambezi recently returned from a trip to Tanzania in East Africa with a bag full of gifts for his family.

Erica and April receive magic moonberry jump ropes from his friend Layla who dyed them by hand. And what's so special about the magic moonberry jump ropes? *"When you jump, they'll grant your wish"*, says Uncle Zambezi. The jump ropes make some pretty amazing things happen as the girls gleefully discover and their summer vacation definitely looks more promising. Dakari Hru includes interesting information on Tanzania (language, customs, and jump ropes). Read it and begin to explore another country!

FACTS, AND CRAFTS IN PICTURE BOOKS

by Paula Gaj Sitarz

NON-FICTION

Allan Fowler's appealing book *How Do You Know It's Summer?* (Children's Press) is a small format book that explains the signs of summer through clear, inviting photographs . Children will see bright green grass and abundant leaves on trees, flowers of all colors, farmland full of fruits and vegetables, and the thunder and lightning of summer storms.

Summer (Cobblehill Books/ Dutton) by Ron Hirschi, "A Wildlife Seasons Book" blends concise text with exquisite and unique photographs of flowers and animals. Children will enjoy seeing baby animals growing, playing, and learning in the summer. In a fun and entertaining way, they'll learn how young bears learn how to catch fish, how baby birds learn to fly, how caribou grow new summer antlers, and how hummingbirds catch bugs for their babies. Hirschi includes photographs of baby mountain sheep, goslings, moose, snowy owls, bluebirds, and woodpeckers.

In *Summertime* (Viking) by Ann Schweninger, youngsters learn many facts about summer through an entertaining and informative text and appealing, soft watercolor and colored pencil artwork. Children will learn about the growth of baby animals in summer, how flowers bud in summer, what happens to trees, how a monarch butterfly grows from an egg, how to protect themselves in the sun and heat, safety tips for thunderstorms, safety tips for the beach, and the nighttime sights of summer from fireflies to shooting stars.

ACTIVITES AND CRAFTS

EcoArt!: Earth-Friendly Art & Craft Experiences for 3- to 9-Year Olds by Laurie Carlson (Williamson Publishing) includes three summer crafts easy for preschoolers to do: "Pebble Trivet & Coaster," "Stone Critters," and "Sand Art." For each activity you'll find a clear and concise list of materials, easy to follow directions, and appealing diagrams.

Projects for Summer & Holiday Activities by Celia McInnes (Garrett Educational Corp.) also has summer crafts appropriate to share with very young children, again with clear directions. Children will enjoy "Painted Pebbles," "Shell Pictures," "Sand Pictures," and "Lemonade." You'll appreciate the appealing format, the list of easily found materials and the clear, step-by-step instructions. For each craft, the author includes an inviting photograph of the finished product that will make children enthusiastic to do the craft.

STILL IN THE

EASY LEARNING—SUMMER FUN!

by Sandra Malcolm

Summer is wonderful time for learning. Many things happen in the summer that aren't a part of our everyday lives such as parades and trips to the amusement park. You'll enjoy the light humor of each of the books for summer learning. Yes, summer is a time for learning, but let's not forget the FUN!

PARADE

by Donald Crews (Greenwillow) uses unique illustrations and simple text to take us to a parade from beginning to end. What's more fascinating to a young child than watching a parade go by?

BEFORE READING, find appropriate marching music. Have children march around the room to the music. Discuss when and where people would march as they were doing. Allow children time to relate stories of parades they have watched or participated in. Make a list of the things they suggest would be seen in a parade.

AFTER READING, ask: *"Does our list match what was in the book parade? What is the same? Different? Are all parades the same? Why or why not?"* Ask children to recall what was taking place at the end of the book and if this is an important part of parades. Have children tell you what was happening along the sides of the parade route.

ACTIVITIES

- Introduce rhythm instruments. Use the instruments to form a marching band.
- Invite a music professional in to share real instruments with children.
- Using wagons, create floats for your parade.
- Watch videos of parades (if available) or schedule a trip to a nearby parade (if available). Discuss what you see.
- Stretch out a long piece of newsprint. Encourage children to draw, paint, color, or paste pictures on to create a parade mural.

CAROUSEL

by Donald Crews (Greenwillow Books) takes us on a carousel ride. His creative illustrations help us feel the increasing movement and speed of the carousel as it goes round and round.

BEFORE READING, if possible, make a tape of calliope music or find appropriate music at a library. Ask children if they have ever heard music such as this. Show pictures of carousels. Encourage children to share whatever experience they have had on a carousel. Introduce the words *carousel* and *calliope*. Discuss their meaning.

AFTER READING, ask: *"Did you feel as if you were riding on a carousel as I read the story? Why?" "Why did Mr. Crews make some of the pictures blurry?" "How did the author help us know the music was loud?" "How did we know the horses were going faster and faster?" "How did we know they were slowing down?"*

ACTIVITIES

- Form a circle. Let children imitate the motion of the carousel by pretending to be the horses.
- Using a toy top, demonstrate how things look blurred when they are in motion. Tape bright colors of paper to the top, then spin the top. Discuss what happens.
- Have children draw and color or paint carousel horses. Cut the horses out and mount them on drinking straws. As children twirl the straws between their hands, the horses will appear to move.
- Discuss other rides and activities found at an amusement park. Write responses on chart paper.
- If possible, plan a day trip to a park to enjoy the rides, sights, and sounds of an amusement park.

POSSUM COME A-KNOCKIN'

by Nancy van Laan (Alfred A. Knopf) has hilarious illustrations, a sing-songy text, and a pesky possum all combining to make this a delightful read-aloud book.

BEFORE READING, ask children: *"What is a possum?" "Has anyone seen one? Where? When?"* Show pictures of possum (or opossums). Show the picture on the front cover. Looking at this picture, do children think the story will be true or make believe? Why? The author of the story is Nancy van Laan. Ask children: *"What does an author do?"* The illustrator is George Booth. *"What does an illustrator do?"*

AFTER READING, ask: *"Did the family see the possum knocking at the door?" "Was everyone in the house busy doing something?" "Why did they stop what they were doing and listen at the door?" "Where did the possum go?" "What did the family members do when they saw no one at the door?"*

ACTIVITIES

- Re-read the story, role-playing the parts as you read. All children can perform the motions of the characters or you can select individuals to be each part.
- Encourage children to say in unison the parts of the story that are repeated.
- Make up other motions or add other characters as you read the story.
- Write a new ending for the story by asking children what would happen if the possum was at the door when they opened it. *"Would you invite him in?" "What would he do in your house?"*
- Draw a picture similar to the illustration in the book. Cut out the window in the house. Have children draw a picture of someone in their family doing something. Take turns holding the pictures in the cut-out window and discussing what is happening.

HOT JUMP

by Ellen Stone Walsh (Bantam/Doubleday/Dell) presents Betsy, the frog, who is tired just "hopping and jumping." Soon she has all the frogs dancing.

BEFORE READING, announce: *"Let's pretend we are frogs."* Ask: *"How would we move across the room?"* Encourage children to realize they are "hopping and jumping." Could a frog move in other ways? How? Bring real frogs to school. Observe how they move about. Show the picture on the front cover of the book. Ask: *"What are the frogs doing in the picture? Our story's title is Hop Jump. Does the title help you know what the frogs are doing? How?"*

AFTER READING, ask: *"What did Betsy say about the frogs in the beginning of our story?" "How do you think she felt about their hopping and jumping?" "What gave her the idea to try different movements?" "Do you think she was happy or sad when she was dancing?" "Why?" "How did the author help us know which frog was Betsy?"*

ACTIVITIES

- Gather several leaves. Hold them high above the heads of the children. Drop the leaves and watch them float to the ground. Observe and discuss what you see.
- Outside or in a large open space, encourage children to move freely: hopping and jumping. Make frog finger puppets.
- Introduce fingerplays about frogs hopping and jumping. Make frog finger puppets.
- Introduce the technique of spatter painting. Spatter paint sheets of construction paper. When dry, encourage children to draw and cut out frogs in any position. Paste the hopping, jumping, twisting, turning, twirling frogs to a large mural.
- Record the simple text on tape to create a read-along for independent reading.
- Supply brightly colored streamers or scarves. Play a classical music tape. Encourage children to dance.

SUMMER CARNIVAL

by Gail P. Jones

If you want to have a fun learning experience with children and not let them know they are learning, just plan a summer carnival! It doesn't matter whether you wish the carnival to be for just your group or a larger number, because the learning will take place from the very first brainstorming session! Plan who, what, where, when, and how using appropriate words. Will it be inside, outside, on the blacktop or grassy knoll? Is one spot wider, longer, shorter, cooler, warmer, or more beautiful? How will the weather affect the place? Will it be windy, sunny, hot, dry, damp, or cool? Do children need to observe some of these things before making their final decisions?

After the who, what, where, and when are decided, let the preparations of the "how" proceed! Will you have prizes, tickets, money, and food? What kinds of games and activities will be best for all? What things can children get from their parents and community? What things can they make and what supplies will they need? Encourage children to measure, count, make signs, print letters, think of slogans for advertising and make up rules to be followed. Every aspect of the planning as well as participating in the activities themselves will involve learning! Plan games that involve scientific knowledge such as sinking and floating, pulleys, leverage, and spatial concepts. Try to plan activities that require large and small motor skills as well as thinking and problem solving.

The ticket making, signs, making of games and prizes will utilize another group of skills. If you need a few carnival activity ideas to get you started, you might consider some of these:

- An **alphabet miniature golf course** with "holes" such as "Alligator Alley," "Beaver Bank," etc.

- **Face painting** with hypo-allergenic make-up.
- **Floating number ducks** for matching, counting or adding! If pairs of ducks with the same numbers are put in a little "pond," it could be used like a game of concentration trying to match pairs.

- **Magnetic Fishing** for numbers, shapes, or colors and sorting them into the correct buckets.

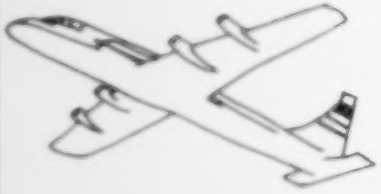
- **A weight-guessing** station using a bathroom scale. Guess the weight of a bag of potatoes or big blocks.
- **Ring the bell** with a mallet and lever made by the children.
- **Skeeball-type games** using nesting boxes on a incline with numbers for scoring.
- **Bingo games** and **ball throwing contests.**
- **Pattern maze paths** to follow just for fun.
- **Make-your-own-snack and lemonade stands.**
- **Wheels** with letters, shapes, colors, and numbers for matching to the choices made on a game board or strip.

With a little time for brainstorming, you'll find the learning will just happen.... *stopping it* may be a problem!

BEFORE AND AFTER THE VACATION

by Susan Entz

Family vacations frequently interrupt the regular attendance of children and the flow of school activities. Rather than struggling against these interruptions, look for opportunities to incorporate them into the curriculum.



BEFORE THE VACATION

Invite families to take photographs of their activities or videotape them, buy duplicates of picture postcards of the places they visit, or bring back souvenirs that represent the cultures or experiences unique to that locale. Let parents know that you will feature these learning experiences with the class when the child returns.

AFTER THE VACATION

☆ Children return from family excursions with rich new experiences to describe. Give them ample time to share with the whole group.

☆ Invite each child to tape record a description of what he did on the trip. Younger or less verbal children may need an adult to assist with the recording to keep the conversation moving. Put these cassettes in the listening center.

☆ Ask parents to send duplicates of photographs to school to serve as the basis for a dictated storybook. Glue each photograph to a piece of colored paper. Record what the child says about the pictures on that page. Bind the books and ask the child to make a cover. Laminate the pages and read the story of each child's vacation at circle time.

☆ An alternative to individual vacation books is to make a class vacation book. Have each child bring one photograph from his trip and ask the family to write a one-page description of what they did. You can mount these on individual pages and place them in the school book. Each page will be returned to the child as part of his portfolio at the end of the summer.

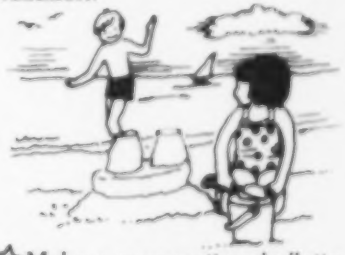
☆ Feature items the child has brought to share with the group at circle time. Put them on display in the language area.

☆ Develop the vacation theme by adding props for dramatic play. For example, if the child has taken a trip to the beach, add a sand bucket and shovel, seashells, beach towels, and a "beach" umbrella, a beach ball, and rubber thongs. Or if the child has traveled by air, add a small suitcase, canceled airline tickets, baggage tags, and airline "wings."

☆ Have the child share picture postcards from the area he visited with the whole class. Announce that the child has brought two of each postcard and they will be placed in the basket. The class may select the Vacation Picture Matching Game during center time.

☆ A lotto board game can be made from picture postcards. Place one of each pair on a large piece of cardboard and the second card in an envelope. Have children match individual cards to the picture on the lotto board.

☆ Encourage parents to accompany their child to school to share experiences they had on their vacation. They may bring objects, share regional foods, or show the videotape of the family vacation.



☆ Make a summertime bulletin board that features family vacations. Display a photograph of the child and a picture/photograph/short description of the family adventures.

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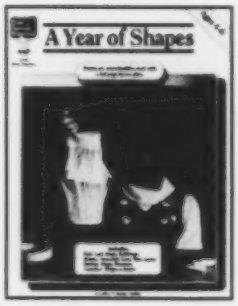

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Vol. 17 No. 5 *For People Who Care for Young Children* September/October 1996

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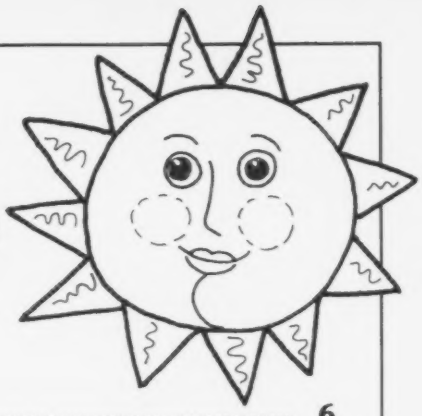

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FIRST TEACHER Publisher and Editor-in-Chief ..... Lisa Lyons Durkin

Art Director ..... Debby Dixler
Editorial and Content Advisors ..... Kathy Faggella, Mary Beth Spann Minucci
Contributing Designers ..... Nina and John Woldin
Logo Design ..... Gene Krackehl
Contributing Photographer ..... Peter Lewin
Production ..... Nina Woldin and Debby Dixler
Editorial Assistant ..... Christine Manavian,
Advertising Inquiries..... 1-800-781-7275

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

by Lisa Lyons Durkin

It's September—a good time to review the everyday events and routines that will be so important in making this a successful year for your program. In this issue of *First Teacher*, we give you suggestions for refining and improving every time period in your day.

Barbara Backer starts off by discussing the time before the start of the day with children when you need to plan and organize your program. Her tips take minutes now and will save you hours later in the year.

Arrival times are key and both Karen Stephens and Jeannine Perez offer suggestions to make these times go smoothly for toddlers, preschoolers, and their parents. There are ideas for departure times at the end of the issue.

Once children have arrived, you're into daily activities. You need a balance of group activities and free choice play and Barbara Fischer looks at the potential problems children can have when faced with making choices. Throughout the issue, you'll learn to create exciting learning centers, including art, music, and dramatic play.

Transitions are a snap with fingerplays and action rhymes according to Paula Sitarz. She points you toward resources for finding both.

When it's time to take a nap, you'll get invaluable ideas for settling down, resting, and waking up from Susan Entz. You'll find that time to eat can also be time to learn in the article about snacktime by Kelly Haack. On the subject of eating, Sherry Burrell has written a thoughtful piece to encourage you to educate parents on giving their children "healthy food messages."

It's fall and we know you are on the lookout for ways to teach children about this colorful season. "Seasons and Cycles" will provide you with lots of ideas for science, art, cooking, and children's literature. "Think Fall" includes seasonal activities in math, language, and music.

The issue ends with an article by Mary Beth Spann Minucci. She writes about her own experience of trying to be a "super teacher"— never taking *time* for herself. Burnout is a very real problem for early childhood educators. Mary Beth's survival tips can be a career saver for the teacher/caregiver who wants to do everything just right. We all want the best for the young children that we care for. And you can count on *First Teacher* to help you through "every time of your day."

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

✏ Our newest contributor, **Kelly Haack**, has taught in early childhood and early childhood special education classrooms for the past six years. Currently she does day care and freelance writing from her home in Stewartville, Minnesota.

✏ **Karen Stephens** is the director of the Illinois State University Child Care Center. She is also an instructor of Child Development in the Family and Consumer Sciences Department at the University. Karen gives numerous workshops around her state in professionalism and staff development. In September, Karen is giving a workshop on self-esteem during Wellness Week. Karen is also writing a column for the Pantagraph, her local Bloomington, IL newspaper called "Keeping the Young at Heart."

PHOTO CREDITS

Peter Lewin: cover, 7, 10, 11, 23, 26, 34

ART CREDITS

Beth Ann Bispham: pages 6, 28, 29
Debby Dixler: pages 16, 17, 19-22, 29, 30
Janet McDonnell: pages 12, 13
Catherine Minor: pages 8, 9, 14, 15, 35
Nina Woldin: pages 5, 18, 24, 27

HELPFUL HINTS

SPECIAL TIMES EVERYDAY

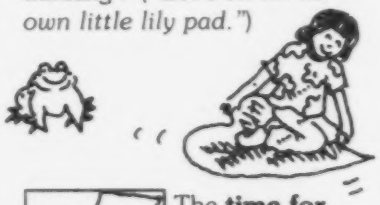
by Gail P. Jones

The **time for making children feel good about themselves** starts when they enter the classroom and you smile and say something such as, *" I'm so glad you're here today!"* Throughout the day, you have a listening ear, a wink, smile, touch or word of encouragement or praise, until the time they leave with a "big hug to take home"!

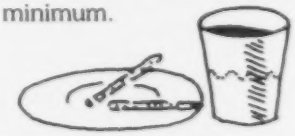
The **time for parents** is also ongoing. Take the time to thank, suppport, remind, praise, and guide, when necessary. Find the time to communicate regularly with parents whether you use a note or "What We Did Today" poster....it all helps to build a strong bond between the school and parents.

The **time to schedule activities** needs to be determined by the age of the children, the length of their day, and their individual needs. It needs to be balanced with active and quiet and a variety of learning experiences. Plan time for resting, cleaning up, and reflection!

The **time for group activities** requires rules established with children so they know what is expected. Sitting quietly in your own space can be "fun" with a little creative thinking . *("Let's sit on our own little lily pad.")*



The **time for snacks and lunch** can be less hectic when children have special jobs like cups, napkins, floor sweeper, etc. Let them help make the rules for "expected behavior" and behavior problems will be kept at a minimum.



The **time for learning** is all the time! Remember that all things offer an opportunity for learning! *"Can you count your pretzel sticks? Or, make them into a rectangle?" "Where do you think the water goes when it goes down the drain?"*

The **time for music (and movement)** is as often as possible! Music is natural for young children and should be used throughout the day from singing songs to lining up to music to lulling children to sleep.

The **time for problem solving** is also constant throughout the day. Provide opportunities for children to solve their personal problems as well as social ones. Replace "time out" with "time to resolve the conflict" whenever possible.

The **most important times are those used for planning!** Take the time to plan not only lessons, but also the transitions, ways to motivate, and to evaluate. Plan for time everyday for listening to children, providing them opportunities to share, verbalize, explore, discover, and rest! When you've taken these "times," you'll have the "time of your life"!

TIME TO GET ORGANIZED

by Barbara F. Backer

Teachers' days are busy. We are constantly moving from activity to activity and from child to child. There never seems to be time to deal with paper work, create bulletin boards, plan lessons, gather materials, and put things away. We waste time searching for misplaced items, and we sometimes forget important tasks because our heads are buzzing with information.

Minutes spent now on organizing our classrooms and our lives can save hours in the future. Use these tips to get started.

MASTER LIST

✏We all know the value of making a list, but finding the list and having it when we need it can be a problem. Invest in a daily organizer (available at office supply stores). A loose leaf binder format offers the most flexibility. List all appointments here. Add pages for grocery lists, lists of books to check out of the library, classroom supplies you need to gather for the day's/week's lesson(s), tasks to do each day, and so on. Keep a list of doctors' numbers and other frequently called numbers in this book. Now you only need to keep up with one item—this book. Everything you need is inside.

STORING CLASSROOM ITEMS

✏Place all themed materials together in a box with a lid, one theme per box. Label each box on the outside so you can identify contents at a glance. Inside the box lid, tape a list of borrowed items such as library books, that you need to round up before teaching the theme. Don't try to make all of these boxes at once. As you complete a theme, box its materials and add that box to your collection.

✏Make use of unused space. About one foot below the ceiling, attach a row of shelves all around your room. Store your theme boxes on these shelves. Keep a small ladder in the room so you can safely reach stored items.

✏When you put up your first bulletin board for the year, place several layers of bulletin board paper on the board. The next background is already in place when you remove the current display and the top layer. (You are "storing" future boards beneath existing displays.)

✏Remove letters in order from a bulletin board display that you plan to use again next year. Gather together the letters for each word. Store each word in its own small, labeled plastic zipper bag and store all of these in a larger bag labeled with the bulletin board's slogan. Store these in the appropriate theme box, described above.

✏Clip large bulletin board characters to skirt hangers, cover with a labeled dry cleaning bag, and hang them in a closet or on a rod suspended from the ceiling in a corner of the room. Hang boards in order by the month they are used.

✏Store "Big Books" in deep oval or round plastic tubs available at variety stores. Books stand on end and titles are easy to find.

✏Put books and companion cassette tapes in plastic zippered bags. Place a gummed dot on the cassette, the book, and the bag, and label them with matching numbers or letters. Children match the labels to put away the items.

✏Stand the cassette/book bags in a plastic dishpan. Children can flip through the collection to find the ones they are looking for.

✏No time for filing during the day? Label three baskets

"Things To Do," "Things To Read," and "Things To File." For temporary storage, drop papers and items into appropriate baskets throughout the day. At day's or week's end, deal with the contents of these baskets.

PEEL AND STICK LABELS

✏Run off peel-and-stick labels with children's names on the labels. Non-writing children keep these in their cubbies and are responsible for sticking labels on their artwork and other papers for identification.

✏Keep a stack of large peel and stick labels on a clipboard. Stamp several with today's date and jot down anecdotal observations on the labels throughout the day (one per child). At day's or week's end, un-peel them and stick each in the appropriate child's folder.

ORGANIZE CLEAN-UP:

✏Encourage neatness. Put small trash cans in each learning center and in the center of the art table. At clean-up time, one child empties all of these into the large classroom trash can.

✏Label classroom shelves so children will know where to put things at clean-up time. Pictures from teaching catalogs make fine labels. Hold them in place with clear, self-adhesive paper. On solid-colored, self-adhesive paper, trace twice around items like scissors and attach one label to the container where scissors are stored and the other to the shelf where the container belongs. On the first days of school, show children where each classroom item belongs, and as you add more toys and learning center activities, have children practice putting them away.

✏Teach children to ask a friend for help if they don't know where an item belongs. Designate a place to put items when several children can't figure out where to put them. At the end of clean-up time, show these things to the group. Many will be claimed as "lost then found."

LESSON PLANS:

✏To shorten planning time, design your own plan book in a three-ring binder. On a blank sheet of paper, make a "master" plan that reflects your program. Write in headings such as "Art," "Science Activity," "Language," "Stories," or "Songs." Near the bottom of each page write "Resources/Materials". That's where you'll list the items you need to gather before class begins. Photocopy this sheet and use one copy for each day of the week, filling in each sheet with that day's plan.

✏Save lesson plan books from year to year. Pages can be moved from old binders to the current one, saving the need to re-write every plan.

SMOOTH ARRIVAL ROUTINES

by Karen Stephens

Coming and going. Coming and going. All experienced teachers know these transitions to and from the classroom can be hard for children (and often parents as well!). Morning entrances can be rocky, but you can help smooth out problems associated with children leaving parents.

The goal is to create a bridge between home and school which helps children master greater independence and self-reliance. Just as importantly, the arrival transitions must help maintain the parent-child bond which is so important to children's sense of security, stability, and overall well-being.

With those ends in sight, here are tips for making arrivals a positive experience for children, parents, and teachers.

- **Prepare the classroom.** Arrive in your classroom at least 15 minutes before families arrive. Make the room welcoming by taking chairs down from tables, opening draperies, filling paint cups at easels, and so on.
- **Plan ways to start communication between parent, caregiver/teacher, and child.** A nature item or bouquet of flowers near the entrance or in the parent-child sign-in area, adds cheer as well as a topic for morning greetings. Taking the time to converse with children and parents as they arrive helps make the transition from home to school easier for everyone.
- **Arrange the space so it encourages children to become involved in the classroom according to their own pace and style.** Some children are slow starters in the morning and prefer, at first, to play alone. Others are eager to jump right into group play. Toys, such as puzzles, Lite Brites, or geoboards allow for individual play. Board games at other tables welcome children who are ready for social interaction and group play. Rotate toys for a fresh start each day.
- **Create a cozy area near the entrance.** This area is welcoming and also encourages the parent and child to sit with each other a bit before the parent leaves. A couch, love

seat, or futon near the entrance conveys good ol' southern hospitality by saying, "Feel free to sit a spell."

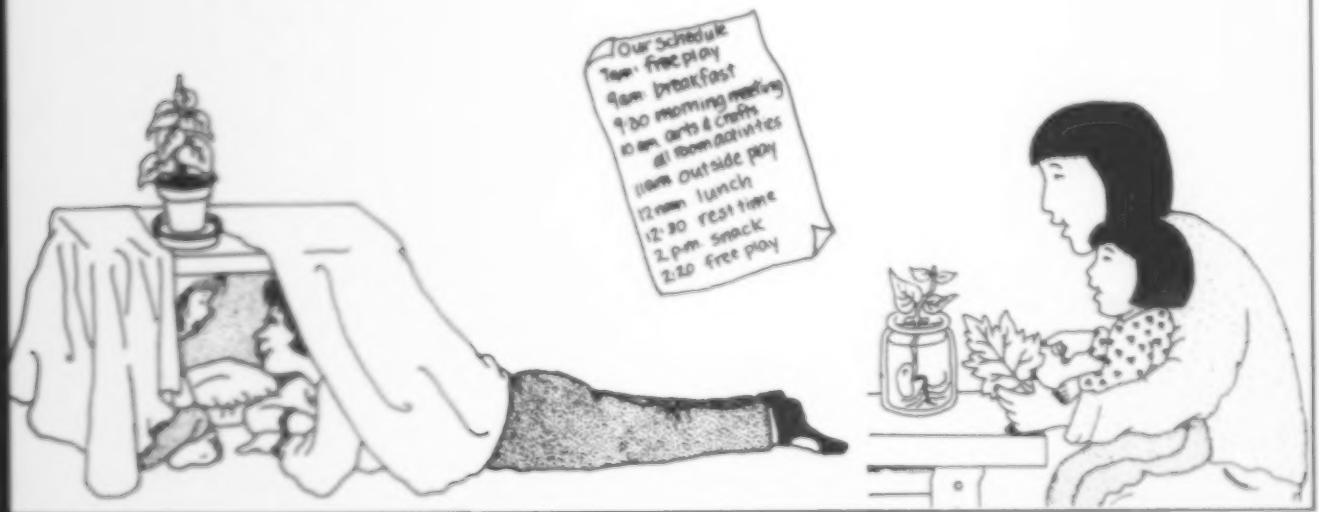
◗ **Display "curiosity items" on a table near the entrance.** Time spent gazing together at wonderful, fascinating objects helps children feel a secure bond with their parent before separation takes place. Items may include any of the following.: a lava lamp (Make sure it is out of children's reach as it gets hot!), wave bottle, chimes, music box, balancing scales, minerals with magnifying glasses, or rain sticks. You can come up with many more ideas.

◗ **Plan rituals to help make separation predictable for children.** Rituals may vary from child to child. For instance, some children enjoy waving good-bye to parents from a classroom window to ease their separation anxiety. For others, this practice would just prolong the tension and nervousness associated with being left at school or day care. Sensitively follow children's lead and use your professional judgement when deciding whether a particular ritual is helpful or not.

◗ **Create a predictable daily schedule which includes a welcoming time so the group can reacquaint itself each day.** Some programs start the morning with a group breakfast or snack. Others begin by gathering children with a Hello song or story. Others start out each day with "helper charts" so completion of classroom chores promotes unity.

Whatever you choose, just make sure you start in a similar way each day. Separation often causes children to be helpless and unsure. Helping them anticipate how their morning routine will start each day helps prevent anxiety that would be associated with chaos and unpredictability. Daily classroom schedule changes are very unsettling to young children.

◗ **Make sure you have an adequate staff in the classroom to provide children (and parents) with needed individual attention as they separate.** Good morning communication helps build a good relationship between children, parents, and staff.



TODDLER TIME

THE TIMES OF A TODDLER'S DAY

by Jeannine Perez

Daydream a bit and think of a toddler's day stretching ahead endlessly and promising adventure and new experiences. Because these children are so young, almost everything happening today will be new and exciting —and sometimes frightening to them.

So you need to plan an environment to help your toddlers feel secure and happy away from home.

MORNING GOOD-BYE

Morning good-byes are perhaps the most traumatic part of each school day. To a young child, a parent's good-bye feels final. Four or five o'clock pick up time is a time span that is impossible to imagine. Toddlers have no concept of time, and may not yet have enough experience to feel confidence in their teacher's reassurances. Because separation apprehension is common, it is important to arrange comfort zones for the day's beginning. Think of your early morning routine as a measure of security for your toddlers, and consider doing some or all of these reassuring steps for a happy beginning and a smooth-flowing day.

- Greet each parent and child by name and with a smile as they come through the door. Don't allow an empty pocket of time to make children feel worried and uneasy.
- A play clock is useful. Show children their arrival time, and let them take turns turning the hands. Help them find the time that their parents will return. This is a tangible and concrete reassurance. Talk about the things you will do together before the time they leave in the afternoon, and anticipate together the things they will be able to share with their parents later.
- Have several low-key activities such as blocks, puzzles, or the housekeeping area ready to engage children. Realize also that some children have not been awake for long, and may just want a few minutes in a rocking chair, a quiet place to play with soft toys, or even the comfort of a blanket or a cot.

PLOP, DROP, AND PLAY

- As early as morning apprehension changes to excitement and energetic activity, enter in. Plop, drop, and play with children. Let their excitement lift your own mood, and become playful. Have fun! This is a good time for cooperative group activities, new ideas, art, and science. Everyone's energy level is high, and it is good to make the most of it. Outside activities and games, walks, and inside cooking projects and art activities that require a longer attention span are great for this time of the day.
- As the morning begins to wind down, it is time to change the pace again. Morning snack has given everyone a break, but

toddlers are beginning to tire and become hungry. To a tired child, Mommy seems even farther away. I've found that this is a good time for circle stories and songs. Often we share familiar ones mixed with new ones. The familiar stories and songs are like old friends, comfortable and safe, and the new ones add the excitement of new learning.

Learning time is a good time to share together the morning's happenings and talk briefly about the afternoon's agenda. Emphasize that after naptime there will be a little time to finish all of the wonderful activities planned before parents come. But first it is time to rest.

NAPTIME AND BEYOND

Naptime can be another difficult time for young children who feel that perhaps Mommy and Daddy really did abandon them forever. A naptime routine that appeals to the senses helps. First we use the bathroom and wash our hands, often rubbing in a little baby or hand lotion. Next we remove shoes and line them up along the wall. Now it is time for a short story. Everyone has their own blanket and soft toy, and soft and familiar music fills the darkened room. Hap Palmer's *Seagulls* is still my own favorite for the beginning of naptime, and I switch to classics or Native American flute music as naptime background music. I go from child to child, rubbing backs. Hopefully by this time, everyone is quiet and drifting off which allows me time for reflection, planning, or just to take a deep breath. The routine described above has satisfied the senses. The darkness, familiar blanket and cot, the feel and smell of lotion, the soft music, and soothing backrub all work together for a good naptime.

The hours after naptime can be hectic. Some children may be leaving; others sleep longer and are still snoozing. Everyone wakes in a different mood, and teachers wish they had six hands and unlimited patience. Afternoon snack helps the transition as does self-directed activities such as clay, blocks, or puzzles. Outside play works well after snack, and group time has a different flavor in the afternoon. The day is winding down, and can sometimes feel fragmented and chaotic.

TIME TO SAY GOOD-BYE

Saying good-bye to teachers at the end of the day is another transition. I try to say good-bye with some statement or sharing that gives a kind of summation and closure to the day and invites anticipation for tomorrow's activities. *"I really liked our story about the frog today. Tomorrow we will read another story about a fat frog who couldn't catch flies." "Tomorrow we will bake cookies that look like the Gingerbread Man."*

As you straighten the classroom for tomorrow's busy day, take a moment to look at it closely, and try to see with your toddler's eyes. Rearrange or add a poster. Move a plant to a child's eye level. Straighten the blocks so they are pleasing to the eye and invite experimentation. Think of the experiences you have given your class. Then reflect on the gifts they have given you: the permission to be playful and have fun and the ability to look at a complex and exciting world with fresh insight.

IT'S TIME FOR CENTERS!

by Gail P. Jones

Center Time may be the most important time of the day for your children because it is the time for "learning by doing," discovery, sharing, practicing language skills, and solving problems. Therefore, it needs "enough" time at a "good" time for the participants. Anytime that follows a large motor activity or outdoor recess, when children aren't hungry or tired, is probably the best time for centers. Children will be "ready" for thinking and doing!

The length of time for centers depends on each situation, but it should always be at least an hour. Children need time to get into the activity, utilize thinking and problem-solving skills, and be able to taper off. Shorter time periods will only increase frustration and stifle creative thinking. Children should be allowed to choose the centers they wish to attend and to move on when they want a change.

Naturally, the next question is: *"How can this work"?*

Once you have determined which centers should be open for the day, prepare children for centertime by discussing ideas for each one. In our class, we have two teacher-guided centers and three to five open centers for independent use. The children each have their own I.D. card and know that the number of pockets posted next to each center is the maximum number of children that may be at that center at one time. Another method might be signing their name on the spaces allotted on a chalkboard or clipboard.

Whatever one you choose, make sure children understand the rule from the beginning and it will solve the "number problem" forever. Children are allowed to stay at a center as long as they wish during center time. On occasion, such as a cooking activity with teacher supervision, it may be necessary to ask children to take turns so everyone can participate. This can best be accomplished by making the centers to which children may go after cooking seem more appealing rather than making them feel they must leave a center. For example, after making cookie batter, suggest children go to the play dough table and cut out a variety of shapes with the cutters to decide which ones they like best.

Before centers open, it is very important to discuss what's happening at each center. This can make the difference between chaos and serenity! Our centers are usually theme-related, so we let children brainstorm ideas and we offer suggestions as well. Let's pretend the unit or theme is Woodland Animals. The teacher-guided centers for this particular day are (l) Language arts—creating stories with woodland animals from a story can and recorded on story paper by the teacher and (2) Small Motor—table games matching animals with their homes. The other centers open are Art, Reading, the Pet Shop (our dramatic play area), and the hands-on bulletin board of forest animals and their environment.

The children already know how to use the bulletin board for finding their homes, etc. So, today they may need something new to motivate them to return to that center. The teacher might say, *"I've put the tape player near the bulletin board so that you can record stories or songs you create about the animals while playing there."*

The other centers may need some ideas from both the children and the teachers for use. Perhaps, you can put some new magazines in the Reading Center, or make "camouflage" paintings in the Art Center adding real leaves and sticks, etc. when children are done painting the animals. The teacher may pull a small brush out of her pocket for brushing the pets in the Pet Shop. Simple additions can inspire children to go to a center that may have become "invisible."

During and after center time, it's helpful to make notes of specific things to determine how much children are "learning by doing." In the Pet Shop, you might notice that there are a lot of letters printed on the clipboard. Ask, *"Kelly, did you make all these letters?"* And, perhaps, *"Would you like to write down my telephone number so that you can call me when the new pets come in?"*

You'll have a good idea of Kelly's ability to write numbers and letters. At other times, you may ask a child to share with you what she did in the Art Center that day, and so on. It may take a conscious effort to get going, but it will provide invaluable information in evaluating children (and the centers) in a non-threatening way.

Clean-up time need not be a hassle. Give children a five-minute warning so that they are not frustrated by being interrupted in their play. They can sing a clean-up song together or you can be creative and suggest that children be bulldozers and clean up the blocks by scooping them into a pile and then lifting them up with the front loader (their arms) and putting them in the box. Motivate them to do it quickly and neatly by saying something like, *"When the toys are put neatly away, I'll be picking the characters to act out in our story today."*

Whatever tactics you use, center time can become a very special "time of your day."

I CAN DO IT MYSELF

by Susan M. Root

Developing independence is a goal we have for young children in our care. Whether you care for children in a center-based program or in your home, there are many things that you can do to encourage independence in play and clean-up. Planning is the key both in your environment and in your schedule.

Make sure you allow enough time for independent play. Children need extended periods of time (45-60 minutes at a time) to get involved in elaborate block building, creative art, or dramatic play. If the time is too short, children's play will be superficial. Plan your schedule for at least two large uninterrupted blocks of time a day.

Plan your environment carefully. Start by choosing a limited number of toys, games, puzzles, and art materials. Clearly label containers and their position on the shelf. Pictures alongside the words give children a beginning understanding of the message in written words. When children can see and match the labels, they can be independent when returning items to the shelves. They feel proud when they can "read" the labels.

Limiting the number of items available at any one time helps in several ways. Children can easily see what is on each shelf. The toys do not become as "familiar" because they are not part of the background clutter. There are toys and art supplies just for those long winter days when everything has become routine.

Consider how you might mix and match materials as the year progresses. What happens when books are near art supplies? Can children imitate an illustrator's work? If you move some small manipulative toys near the play dough, how does the play change? Get the most mileage out of your materials by moving them to different areas of the room. Children will generate new and interesting ways to play.

Now check each area of your room. Are materials within children's reach? Are pictures and artwork displayed at children's eye level? What about other written material in appropriate places? What about writing supplies? A small tablet and pencil in the block corner encourages sign making. Paper and pencil by the play phone is a good place for taking down messages. Emergent literacy is fostered through all areas of the classroom.

Some children may need help in getting started with independent play. A planning board with pictures of different areas of the room can be used as a way to help children make a choice. You might also consider a "To Do" list that you help children make at the beginning of the day. On a small piece of paper, jot down three things that the child would like to do that day. Draw a quick symbol for each, such as a square for block play, brush for art, and so on. When children become restless or begin to wander around the room, you can check the list together and find a new "job" from the list.

Children will develop independent skills in an environment that is organized and orderly and that changes often enough to spark their interest and curiosity. You're off to a great start!

FREE CHOICE PLAY—HOW FREE IS IT?

by Barbara Fischer

You have seen this child. She is the one who is happily engaged in the times of your day until it's time for free choice play. Instead of readily choosing one of the many interesting activities presented, she just stands there dissolving in a flood of tears. What, you wonder, has turned this happy child into one so miserable? With your help, these children can learn how to turn the tears —into smiles.

For most children, free choice play is a fun time—a time to become involved in a favorite activity. Then why do some children find this so difficult? Let's take a look at the times of your day.

▶ **Group Activity** This is a time when children are working with an art project, listening to a story, enjoying circle time or playing musical instruments under the guidance of a teacher.

▶ **Dramatic Play** Children become involved in role playing using puppets, dress ups, masks, or other props while interacting with a teacher.

▶ **Outside Play** The teacher may take children on a nature walk, conduct games, or help them participate in a gross motor program.

▶ **Free Choice Play** Inside the classroom, children may choose from a variety of materials such as games, manipulatives, art media, or puzzles. Outside children can enjoy swings, the sand box, climbing structures, or play their own games.

A close look at the first three activities reveals a common component: the teacher.

Free choice play requires children to make choices by themselves. Making choices can be overwhelming and difficult for young children. Give your children coping strategies that will enable them to learn how to make choices. Try this five-step plan to help these children "find something to do."

1. Begin by making free choice play manageable: break it into small tasks.

2. Quietly take the child aside and offer her only two choices. You might ask if she would like to play with the play dough or the puzzles. Once she tells you her choice, take her to that area and help her get started.

3. Continue this same procedure for several days until she is able to choose an activity easily.

4. Now add a third choice. Gradually in crease the number of choices until you feel confident that she is becoming comfortable with this process.

5. Reverse this process. Ask her to tell you where she would like to play. When she is able to make choices easily with your guidance, gradually pull away. Let her begin making choices on her own.

Use this plan with outside activities, too. If frustration creeps in again, go back to Step 4 and continue trying. Some children will need more time to gain an understanding of the decision-making process. The key is your patience and time.

Making choices is an important skill that can be acquired at an early age. Give your children strategies to help with the decision-making process. Once learned, these skills can be used in many situations long after preschool days are over.

PROP BOXES FOR DRAMATIC PLAY

by Tania Kourempis-Cowling

Traveling safely through the world of imagination, children try on new roles and experience new adventures. Pretend play opens the doors with excitement and fun. Dramatic play allows children to explore adult jobs such as community helpers, business owners, and parents.

A well planned socio-dramatic environment is the essence of creative play. Prop boxes are easily obtained and can be transformed into many themes. These large cartons can be painted and easily decorated as a cooperative art project in class. The inside manipulative materials are just as important as the setting. These items can be bought; yet donations from businesses and parents are best on the class budget. Set up prop boxes in a large area or place them in separate corners.

As each prop box is completed, gather the class together to discuss its theme and contents. Encourage vocabulary by supplying correct labels for room decor and all equipment. Allow plenty of time for free play, observing your children as they are "learning by doing!"

There are ideas for numerous prop boxes and their contents on these two pages. There are so many other boxes that can be put together, such as a garden box, magic box, camping box, painting box, restaurant box, and so on. Let children use imagination to explore all the facets of everyday life.

FLORIST BOX

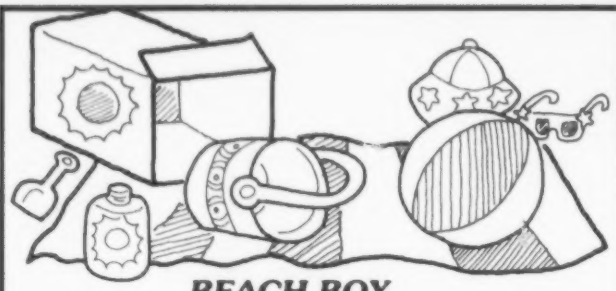
Working with flowers is a colorful and creative occupation. Make flower arrangements using plastic or silk flowers, plastic vases, gift cards, baskets, colorful tissue paper, florist foam, ribbons, and bows.

BANK BOX

Paint the carton to look like an authentic bank building. Inside, have play money, a bank or cash register drawer (for sorting money), deposit slips, pens, pencils, bank sign, green visors, purses, wallets, a lock box, and lots of keys. Across the curriculum, count paper dollars or pennies together for math and use colorful crayons to make money rubbings for art.

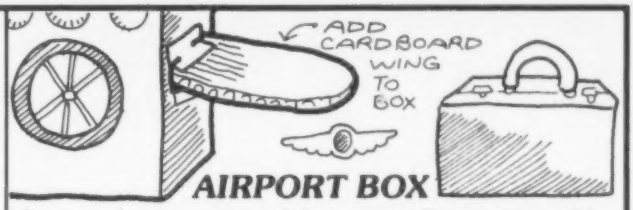
BAKERY BOX

Have plenty of play dough available, don't forget about the homemade kind (very economical and non-toxic). Stock up on rolling pins, garlic press, small pans, muffin tins, cookie cutters, birthday decorations, candles, chef hats, aprons, oven mitts and some real snacks to nibble on.



BEACH BOX

Spend a vacation day at a pretend beach looking at sandy shore posters on the walls. Spread out beach towels and stock a box full of sunglasses, empty suntan lotion bottles, buckets, shovels, beach balls, snorkels, fins, sun hats, visors, and don't forget portable radios for music.

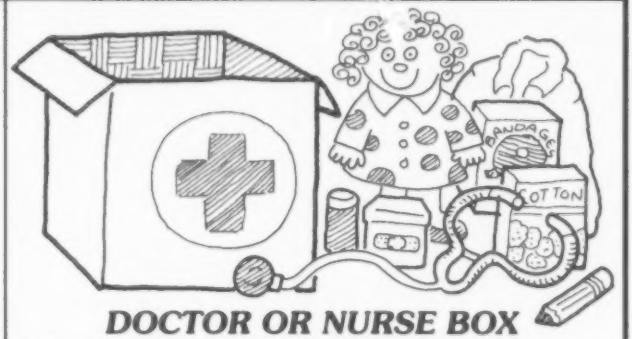


AIRPORT BOX

Imagine the excitement of the airport. Try to obtain old steering wheels, caps, "wing" pins (ask your airlines to provide these), tickets, travel brochures, suitcases, maps, food containers, trays and dolls to sit in chairs as passengers. Draw a cockpit instrument panel. In class, read books about travel to other lands and vacations to see relatives. Create a travel collage in art, cutting out pictures of cities and airplanes from magazines and brochures. Glue these onto colored construction paper. Ask a pilot or flight attendant to visit your classroom.

JEWELRY STORE BOX

Set up a display of jewels and play salesperson. Collect an assortment of faux jewelry— necklaces, bracelets, clip-on earrings, watches, etc. You will also need small boxes, small bags, play money, cash register, price tags, magnifying glass to look at the jewels and hand displays for rings. (Trace your hand on cardboard and cut these out for mannequins.)



DOCTOR OR NURSE BOX

Set up this center using dolls in chairs and cots for patients. Set up your medical cabinet with cotton, plastic digital thermometers, bandages, stethscope, eye chart, empty pill bottles, men's white shirts to use as uniforms, nurse's hat, telephone, pad and pencil. Enhance this theme by reading books about seeing the doctor making this a positive visit. Try to arrange for an emergency vehicle to visit your school, letting children view the inside with its medical equipment inside.

CONSTRUCTION BOX

Design the carton as a new building in progress. Provide such props as hard hats, tape measures, small tools, sand paper, overalls, lunch box, scraps of wood, blocks to encourage inside building, paintbrushes, wallpaper, etc. Do related activities to enhance this theme across the curriculum. Read books to the class on this subject, make a construction paper tool box and tools for art, visit a building site for a fieldtrip or have a carpenter visit your classroom showing children how to cut wood or hammer nails correctly.

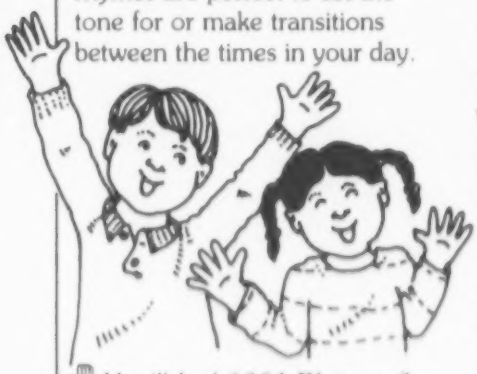
GROCERY STORE BOX

This is always a fun activity. Display grocery food ads on the walls. Line your walls with plastic foods, empty containers, dry food and cereal boxes, egg and milk cartons, etc. Plastic bins make shopping easiest. At the checkout, you'll need play money, grocery bags, coupons, and a toy register.

TRANSITION WITH FINGERPLAYS

by Paula Gaj Sitarz

Fingerplays and action rhymes are perfect to set the tone for or make transitions between the times in your day.



You'll find *1001 Rhymes & Fingerplays: for Working with Young Children* by The Totline Staff (Warren Publishing House) a comprehensive, well-organized, and extremely useful collection of fingerplays. There are quiet fingerplays for naptime in the section "Myself" and specific fingerplays for snack time and transition time in "My School." There are fingerplays in "Clothes" for getting ready for outdoor play and going home. Use the fingerplays on food in "Health" as children prepare for snack or meals. The authors provide fingerplays on "Caring and Sharing," "Music" for when children play with rhythm instruments, and a variety of other topics you'll find appropriate including colors, numbers, getting acquainted, and holiday seasons. Fingerplays on special people include Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Lincoln. A first line index and a subject index make it easy to find the perfect fingerplay for the occasion.

2's Fingerplays Experience by Liz and Dick Wilmes (Building Blocks) is also a complete and handy collection of fingerplays that can be used with the youngest child to youngsters age five. The Wilmes offer many concrete suggestions on how to share fingerplays and describe how to use "Fingerplay Cards." In "Rest and Relax," you'll find perfect fingerplays for naptime. There are many fingerplays that invite children to stretch and prepare for the next activity and many fine fingerplays for playtime.

Too Many Rabbits and other Fingerplays: About Animals, Nature, Weather, and the Universe by Kay Cooper (Scholastic) is a solid collection of easy fingerplays accompanied by stunning cut-paper illustrations in vibrant colors. Each fingerplay introduces an interesting factual concept in a subtle and entertaining way. The subjects range from frogs and apples to wind and leaves. These appealing, thoughtful, and clever fingerplays are perfect for circle time.

In *Move Over, Mother Goose! Finger Plays, Action Verses & Funny Rhymes* (Gryphon House), Ruth I. Dowell offers a varied collection of fingerplays on subjects ranging from "Seasons and Holidays" to "Color and Numbers." Particularly useful are the fingerplays in the chapter "Cooking and Eating," perfect to share before snack or meal time.

Terry Lynne Graham offers a wide variety of fingerplays on, for example "Seasons," "Family"," and "Shapes and Space," in *Fingerplays and Rhymes: For Always and Sometimes* (Humanics Ltd.). You'll want to use the fingerplays in the chapters "Bring Children Together: Making Transitions,"Quiet Time," "Circle Time," "Stretches," and "Show and Tell." Also helpful is the chapter on "Nutrition and Health" that includes many fingerplays about food.

Finger Frolics: Over 250 Fingerplays for Children from 3 Years by Liz Cromwell, Dixie Hibner, and John R. Faitel (Partner Press) also offers a variety of enjoyable fingerplays. You'll want to use the fingerplays in "Food," "Circle Games" and "The Four Food Groups." There are also individual fingerplays perfect for stretching, transitions, getting ready to listen, or to nap.

Seasons and Cycles

by Jeannine Perez

Your day is a predictable cycle. Circle time, snacktime, naps, and so on usually occur in the same time frame each day and so children can count on them and look forward to these times. Fall is the perfect time to explore cycles in nature. The seasons create a dramatic cycle that you can talk about all year long. Following are suggestions for year long projects that you can start this fall.

Reserve one large empty wall space for a giant paper tree. Cut out a trunk and crooked branches from brown paper, making them big enough to completely fill the space. Or roll and crumple paper into trunk and branch shapes for a more sculptured three dimensional effect. If you have windows next to the wall space, you can extend branches across the glass.

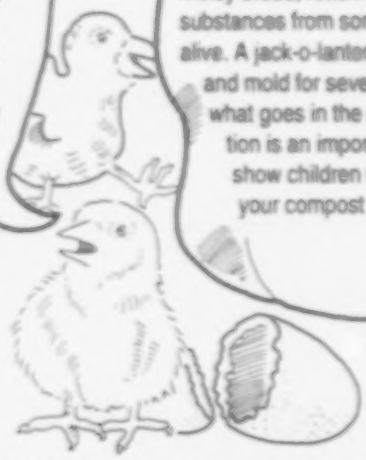
Like its live counterparts, your tree can change with the seasons. Let children cover it with colorful leaves in the autumn. Cut the leaves from construction paper, colored tissue paper, or use real leaves. (Real leaves dry and turn brown, just as they do in nature.) Discuss what happens to wildlife as seasons change, and add squirrels, birds, and insects to your tree.

Winter gradually changes the tree to its bare skeleton, and the animals also change as we add white snow drifts to the scene. Of course, spring and summer bring new color and life to your tree. Always, it is a reminder of the ways nature adapts and changes through the seasons.

Ongoing Activities

Begin an ongoing nature collage on a narrow strip of wall by attaching adhesive backed vinyl to the wall with the adhesive side out. Encourage children to bring in small objects like leaves, feathers, and seeds.

Hatch baby chicks or ducklings in the springtime for an exciting science lesson. Incubators are fairly inexpensive, and hatcheries or nearby farms can provide fertilized eggs. Create a book to draw the growing chick/duck, then correlate the pictures to your calendar to visualize what is happening in your eggs! Be sure to have a place prepared for hatchlings, and a happy permanent home for chicks/ducks when they get too big to keep in your room.



Start a "Rot collection." You can include wonderfully gross items: moldy bread, rotten apples, sour milk that has curded and unknown substances from someone's refrigerator. Eliminate animals, dead or alive. A jack-o-lantern is excellent to observe. Watch him sag, spoil, and mold for several weeks. Do use your own judgement about what goes in the collection, and how long you keep it! Decomposition is an important part of life cycles. Your "Rot collection" will show children what happens to the organic matter you bury in your compost pile.

Books

Check your bookshelves for books that show sequence and change. Here are three which give children the idea of cycles of change.

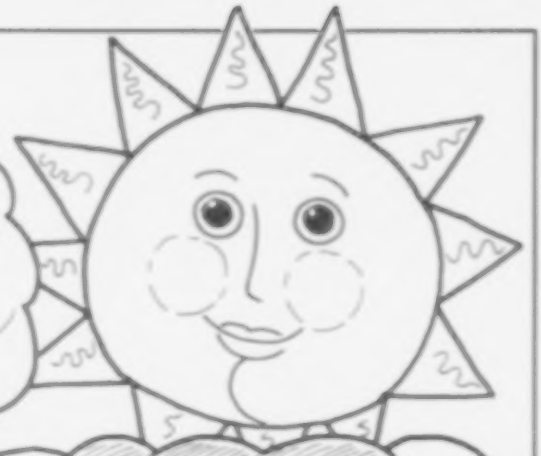
The Little House by Virginia Lee Burton (Houghton Mifflin), is a classic that shows the changes caused by urbanization and also seasonal changes. Children quickly identify with the little house and love the happy ending of the story.

Peter Spier's Rain, by Peter Spier (Doubleday) chronicles the cycle of a rainy day, full of ordinary activities, and the magic of a stormy day. The book has no words, and children love to "read" it to others.

All in a Day by Mitsumasa Anno (Putnam) is fun to read together when talking about daily activities.

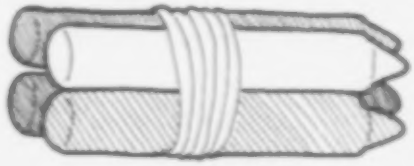
Art

To show how seasonal colors blend and are altered with weather changes, experiment with colors that change. Begin with clear containers of water, and drop in food coloring in basic colors. Then watch the coloring spread and diffuse. Add other colors to watch the colors mix and blend.



Create soft hued watercolor pictures by sponging heavy watercolor paper with water and dropping watercolors that spread and blend into new colors. After the papers are dried, use them as the background for silhouettes of buildings and trees cut from black construction paper.

Weather changes come with seasonal changes. Talk about the clothes we wear on warm, cool, rainy, and windy days. Then help each child cut out a paper doll shape from heavy paper. Together, draw clothes to fit the paper doll, and decorate them to become articles of clothing appropriate to changing weather. This would be a hard activity for young children to do without adult help, but boys and girls enjoy the finished projects.

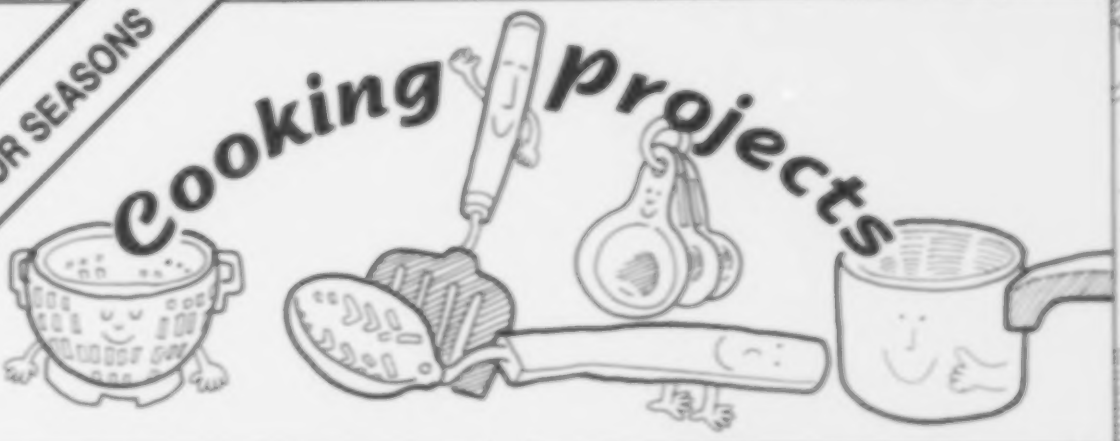


Make a "crayon machine" by taping together four or five unwrapped crayons and experimenting with the marks they make. Make still more autumn tree pictures by using the crayon machine to make varicolored trunks and branches, then folding circular coffee filters and dipping them in colored water. After drying, unfold and glue the colorful tree tops to your crayoned trunks.

Night/day cycles are easier for children to understand than the months or seasons. Talk about morning and nighttime routines at circle times, and make small booklets that are simply stapled together with sun and moon shaped front and back covers. Let children draw pictures of daytime activities on pages following the sun cover, then turn the book over and draw pictures of nighttime activities on pages following the moon back cover.

TIME FOR SEASONS

Cooking Projects



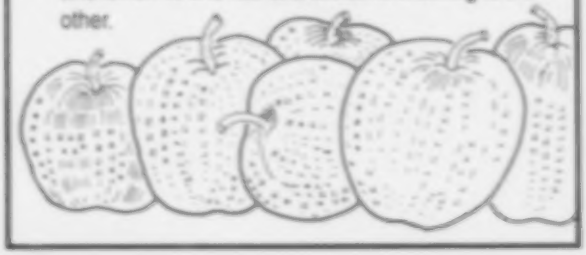
Almost any cooking project demonstrates scientific changes, and you have the added surprise of taste! Make applesauce by peeling fresh apples, cooking slowly until soft, and sweetening to taste. Make your children partners in the process. Save the seeds to plant and draw a poster showing the cycle; seed to tree to apple to applesauce and more seeds to plant.

Spicy Cooked Applesauce

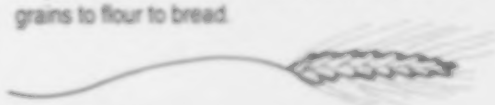
You'll Need: 6 apples ▲ 2 Tblsp. honey and 1 tsp. lemon rind or 1/2 tsp. cinnamon and 1/4 tsp. nutmeg peeler ▲ plastic knife ▲ saucepan or electric fry pan ▲ strainer or collander ▲ blender ▲ grater

What to Do:

1. Adult or child peels and cuts each apple into eight pieces.
2. Child places all pieces into a saucepan or electric fry pan. Adult cooks apple slices on low heat (10-15 minutes) or until apples are mushy. Adult removes pan from heat.
3. Child mixes warm (not hot) appplesauce with a fork for a chunky texture. Child can push sauce through strainer or collander for smooth applesauce. (Use a blender for extra smooth texture.)
4. Child adds honey and lemon rind or cinnamon and nutmeg to the cooked applesauce.
   Variation: Divide applesauce in half and add honey and lemon to one half and cinnamon/nutmeg to the other.



Breadmaking is a series of exciting changes, from ingredients to the risings to baking and finally eating. Read *The Little Red Hen* and draw the sequence of events from wheat seed to plants to grains to flour to bread.

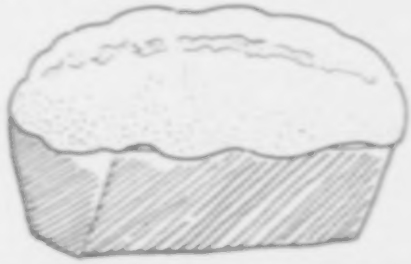


Quick Healthy Bread

You'll Need: 2 1/2 cups white flour ▲ 3 Tblsp. oil ▲ 4 cups whole wheat flour ▲ 3 Tblsp. yeast ▲ 3 cups warm water (115-125°F) ▲ 1 cup powdered milk ▲ 1/3 cup honey or molasses ▲ 1 Tblsp. salt

What to Do:

1. Mix water, yeast, honey or molasses, and oil in a bowl.
2. Add half of the total amount of flours and beat. Add remaining ingredients and stir well.
3. Let dough rise in a warm place for 15 minutes.
4. After rising, knead for 10 minutes. Sprinkle flour on table when kneading.
5. Divide dough in half. Place in 2 greased bread pans.
6. Let dough rise 15 minutes in a warm place. Bake in 375°F oven for 20-30 minutes.



THINK FALL

by Susan G. Mills

Autumn is the busiest time of the year. Everywhere you look someone or something is preparing for the coming season. In nature, plants and animals are busy changing and preparing themselves for the months ahead. Exploring this theme helps children and adults to understand the world around them and their place in it.

This unit examines the activities of food preparation and storing, changes in the environment, and how fall seasonal changes affect our lives and the world around us.

MATH

- Collect leaves, acorns or have children bring them from home to sort by different qualities: color, size, or shape. Or you can make a classroom set of leaves from construction paper in assorted colors.
- Collect many different kinds of apples. Make an apple exhibit telling the name of the apple, where it comes from, and recipes that work well with it.

ART

- Make rubbings of rocks, trees, leaves.
- Make an autumn mural. Use lots of different kinds of materials to show what is happening in nature to get ready for winter. Paint over it with watercolors.

COOKING

- Have an apple party. Let children bring a favorite apple recipe to school to share with others. Collect the recipes and make an apple cookbook.
- Toast pumpkin seeds and eat them. Or peel the outside off the seed and pop it in oil like popcorn.

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

- Write down words to describe the world around you. What does the wind feel like? How does the cold air makes your nose feel?
- List words that describe fall: *cold, colorful, brisk, ...* Use these words for later writing with children.
- Do an acrostic poem using an autumn word.

Wild	**F**alling
Inside	**A**utumn
Nippy	**L**eaves
Dark	**L**and

- Make a class book with each child illustrating a hike/adventure field trip. Include text dictated or written by each child. Bind these together to make a book.
- Read *Winter Days in the Big Woods*, a picture book adapted from the Little House Books by Laura Ingalls Wilder (Scholastic).

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

- Have children pretend to be trees. Use music to set the stage.
- Act out a nature story with children.

SCIENCE

- Look at the leaves you find. Which tree did they fall from? Find leaves from all the trees in your playyard. It's fun to learn the difference between an oak, maple, or walnut tree. What shape are they? What species are they? Identify the trees and make a chart of the species in your neighborhood.
- What are animals doing at this time of year? Watch chipmunks, squirrels, raccoons, mice, and other animals carefully. Where do snakes go? Why? Where did all the insects go? Look on the plants for insect galls, balls, or bumps that house insects or their eggs.
- Read *Chipmunk at Hollow Tree Lane*, by Victoria Sherrow (Smithsonian Institution and Trudy Management).
- Learn about hibernation. Bears don't really hibernate, but they do slow down and sleep a great deal in the cold weather. The animals that truly hibernate are bats, woodchucks, ground squirrels, and jumping mice.

TIME TO TAKE A NAP

by Susan Entz

Naptime can be a challenging time of day for both children and adults. While all young children need both physical activity and periods of rest, there may be a few youngsters in each group who have difficulty settling down at naptime.

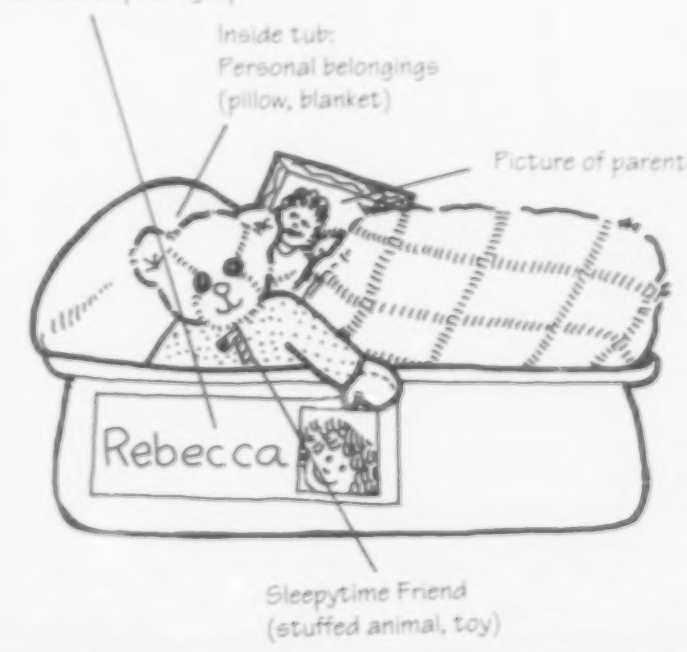
Since sleep needs vary greatly from child to child, careful planning will ease the transitions into rest period and rousing children afterwards. Here are a few suggestions for developing a successful naptime.

GETTING READY

- Schedule enough opportunities for active play and physical movement earlier in the day so children will be more ready for a rest.
- Establish expectations and stick to a routine. Children may resist naptime for a few days, but quickly recognize the flow of the daily activity includes a rest.
- Arrange the room for rest time with all materials and equipment in place before children come in.
- Be sure each child has recently been toileted and gotten a drink of water.
- Have a quiet group activity: read or tell a story; recite a poem (Wee, Willie, Winky); sing quiet songs or lullabies.
- Explain the reason for quiet time. *"Our bodies need to...."*
- Remind everyone of the rest time rules. For example, every child must stay in his own personal space and must respect others in the room. That means you must be quiet and not disturb others who want to sleep.
- Let children get personal belongings. (See Naptime Necessities below)
- Lay out mats/blankets. Instruct children to put out their own, depending on their age.

Group children who typically sleep near each other and those children who typically do not sleep in another part of the room. Be sure that the usual "non-sleepers" have enough space between themselves so those who might sleep occasionally will have the opportunity to do so. Be sure each child has his own space and is not overly crowded.

NAPTIME NECESSITIES



TRANSITION TO SLEEP

- Speak in a quiet voice.
- Dim the lights.
- Play slow, melodic, background music.
- Do guided visualizations as needed. For example: *"Pretend you are a balloon. Fill yourself up with air. Now slowly, let the air out."* Repeat.

OR *"Imagine that a gentle breeze blows through our window. It picks you up and you float gently out of the room. You float up and up until you are flying through the clouds."*

OR *"Wiggle different parts of the body, and then have them relax quietly for rest time."* (Name several body parts, concluding with the whole body resting.)

OR *"Pretend you are a snail. Snails like to sleep during the day and come out at night. Crawl slowly around your mat, like a snail and then climb onto your mat, pull yourself into your shell and take a rest. Good afternoon, snails."*

- Create a restful atmosphere. Be calm and soothing; move slowly, quietly, and with fluid movements.
- Tuck in children or rub backs as needed.
- Avoid talking; whisper comforting words when necessary.
- Quietly withdraw. Wait until most children are asleep before starting another task.

REST TIME FOR ALL

Even children who do not sleep need to learn to rest and relax. Set a minimum rest time (20-30 minutes). Have a large clock in the room with moving hands and point to where the hands must move before the non-sleepers can participate in quiet activities. This will help children delay gratification, develop an appreciation for the passage of time, and realize that rest and quiet time is important.

(**Note**: Look for signs that children are not getting enough rest. They may be tired, cranky or yawn.)

QUIET ACTIVITIES

After naptime, children who are not sleeping may do one of the following:

- listen to music or a story on tape through ear phones.
- listen to a cassette recorded by a parent/guardian.
- look at a picture book.
- play a quiet game.

For example:flannelboard file folder story, math Workjob on a flannel background to mute the sound, or drawing on a naptime clipboard.

WAKE-UP TRANSITIONS

- Open shades or turn on lights.
- Play lively music, but not too loudly.
- Gently nudge hard-to-wake children and call their names.
- Direct children to go to the toilet.
- Ask children to put their nap belongings back into their tubs and replace on the shelf.
- Each child may then play quietly (puzzles, books, small toys, drawing), while others are waking up.

SPECIAL NAP TIME PROBLEMS

Occasionally children will make a successful entry to a new school, but have difficulty at naptime. These children may be experiencing separation anxiety that was not apparent when the parent departed. Take some time to comfort this child. Talk about this not being their regular pillow or as comfortable as their own bed. Encourage the child to express his feelings and to suggest things that might make him feel better. (A picture of the missing parents, a tape-recording of their voices, a special object from home.) Suggest that just for today the child pretend he is home in bed and starting to get sleepy.

MUSIC TIME

by Margery A. Kranyik

Can't carry a tune in a bucket? No problem! The children in your class won't mind a bit. In addition, music isn't just singing. You can provide experiences with rhythm instruments, actions songs, and music listening as well.

Children need music every day. Singing simple songs helps them to connect these ideas, improve language skills, and develop social skills. Using rhythm instrumnents provides accompaniments to songs and recorded music, develops coordination and helps children explore sounds. Listening to music helps develop listening skills, fosters attention spans and increases knowledge of all types of music.

Provide for some type of music experiences each day. Some experiences may occur as part of your circle time, others may be a part of a special music time, and still others may become background music for other events of the day.

SINGING

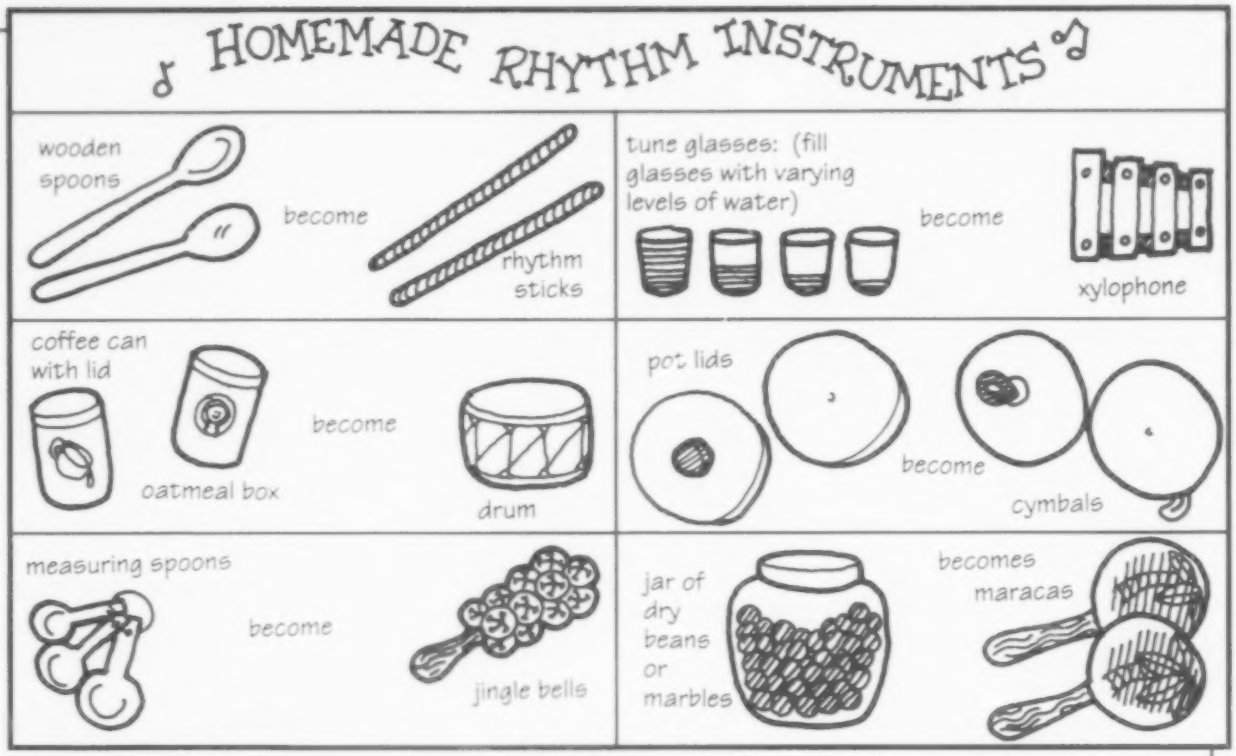
Group and circle time are natural settings for a classroom singing experience. It can be the time to sing old favorites that children request or time to learn a new song to reinforce a current theme or skill. You can find songs about the weather, holidays, colors, shapes, and body parts, to name a few. The Totline series, *Piggyback Songs*, offers a variety of songs sung to familiar tunes that integrate with many preschool and toddler learning experiences. Group singing reinforces the skill of making choices as children request a favorite and learn that they must share that opportunity with others.

On days with inclement weather, action songs such as "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes," "If You're Happy and You Know It," and "Hokey Pokey" can help get rid of some of the excess energy and help develop coordination. Use recorded music occasionally to help children follow directions.

For some children, group singing provides opportunities for them to sing solo for the group. Encourage this by using a microphone prop or by making a make-believe mike. (Stuff one end of an empty toilet tissue roll with aluminum foil or black paper to form a ball. Paint with tempera paint.)

For infants, singing time is **all** the time, but **you** are the singer. Sing to babies as they are being fed, diapered, or put down for naps.

Songs are great for transitions. Make up your own verses to send a message that it is time to clean up, line up, or gather as a group.



RHYTHM INSTRUMENTS

Start slowly if you are using rhythm instruments for the first time. Emphasize with your children that they are not toys. Children will want to see how loud and how fast they can be played. Demonstrate how they are played and where they are placed when you are giving directions. "Instruments at rest" means that instruments are placed on the carpet or table. "Instruments up" means that everyone is ready to play. Accompany simple nursery rhymes or counting songs at first. Children can play as they sing numbers or other word cues in the song. Try songs such as, "One Little, Two Little, Three Little Instruments" with children playing only as you sing the numbers. Peruse your recordings of children's songs and instrumental music to see what your class can accompany.

Use quiet music until children gain self control with the instruments. Then become a marching band and take the instruments around the room, school building or outdoors to the play area. Integrate a "Parade of the Week" into your themes. Children who are visually impaired can perform with the aid of peer partners. Use pictures to cue children with hearing difficulties.

LISTENING

The child who exclaimed, *"Listen Mommy, that's Mozart,"* while riding in an elevator attested to the influence of music in the classroom. Have a "Composer of the Month" or "Performer of the Month." Discuss the specialty of the composer or performer at group time and play their compositions as background music. Use background music at free choice time, during snack or lunch, or pre-rest. Be sure to include music with a variety of instrumentation and from a variety of cultures. Ask parents to share a tape from their ethnic background or a family favorite. Ask friends to bring tapes from vacation spots to enhance your library of recorded music.

If you discuss musical instruments with children, isolate segments of musical compositions that highlight the instrument you are discussing such as the flute, double bass, or violin. The Nutcracker Suite by Tchaikovsky and Carnival of Animals by Saint Saens feature various solo instruments for children identify.

Consider guest performers. They may relate to your study of community performance groups or instruments. Use parents, local community groups, and high school or college music departments as resources. Many will be glad to pay a visit and perform for you.

Whatever your musical choice may be—singing, playing or listening—make music time a part of your day...every day.

18

SNACK TIME LEARNING AND FUN

by Kelly Haack

In the routine and rhythm of a young child's day, snack plays an important role. Following are some ways you can create a fun learning environment during snack. Use these ideas as springboards for your own ideas.

ENERGY AND NUTRITION

Young children have small stomachs which fill and empty quickly. For this reason, snack plays an important role in providing them with energy and nutrition. Try some of these ideas to fill nutrition gaps.

- Sneak in vegetables by cooking them into whole-grain pancakes.
- Blend milk with bananas for a sweet shake or add fresh fruit to plain yogurt.
- Spread peanut butter onto sliced apple rings and eat sandwich style for added protein and fiber.

TEACHING NUTRITION

You can help develop healthy eating attitudes and create healthy eaters by teaching nutrition. Keep a graph of the food groups, adding a star to a food group each time something from it is served. Encourage variety by pasting a picture of each new food served onto a mural. Casually mention the value of foods you serve. Most important, serve only healthy foods. Children will learn to eat healthy if they are served healthy.

NEW FOOD BLUES

Children, by nature, resist trying new foods. The best way to broaden their culinary horizons and nutritional options is to make foods seem familiar. Serve new foods in small quantities alongside familiar foods several times. Allow children to look at the food, smell it, and eventually taste it. Include them in on food preparation, discussing the food as you work. Finally, respect a child's desire not to eat a food. When food becomes a power struggle, healthy eating attitudes are lost.

SOCIALIZING AT SNACK

The toys are put away, squabbles forgotten, and your children are gathered together for a snack. Even so, it's tempting to rush through snack to get to the next activity. Slow down and use this opportunity to practice social skills. Encourage taking turns by reviewing the day, asking each child to recall an activity. Demonstrate listening skills by listening intently and responding enthusiastically to what children say. As children pass the snack, request the use of polite words such as, *"Please"* and *"Thank you."*

FOOD FOR THE BRAIN

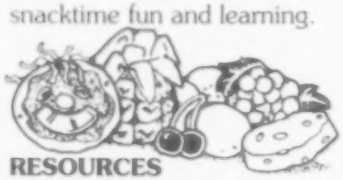
- Turn snacktime into learning time by trying some of these activities.
- Serve foods of only one color to teach color concepts. For example, add green food coloring to milk and homemade bread.
- Trail mix is a math activity when the pieces are sorted and counted.
- Name snacks after favorite story characters. For example, "Curious George's Bananasicles." (Frozen bananas smeared with peanut butter and sprinkled with crushed nuts.)
- Explore science by looking for changes in foods as you prepare them.
- Cut sandwiches into different shapes with cookie cutters.

KID COOKS

I have already given you some simple snacks children can help prepare. Here are a few more to jog your own ideas.

- Let children wash and use dull knives to cut soft fruits for a fruit salad.
- For a simple fruit tart, top refrigerator biscuits with fruit and cinnamon and bake according to the package.
- Spread peanut butter on rice cakes and create funny faces with coconut, raisins, and other toppings.

The learning opportunities created by snacktime are endless. With these ideas and a file box or notebook to jot down your own ideas, your center will soon be overflowing with snacktime fun and learning.

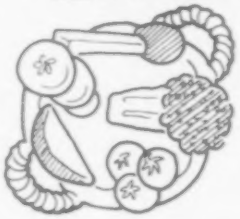


RESOURCES

- *Feed Me! I'm Yours* by Vicki Lansky (Meadowbrook Press)
- *Sugar-Free Toddlers* by Susan Watson (Williamson Publishing)
- *Kids in the Kitchen* by Micah Pulleym and Sarah Bracken. (Sterling Publishing Co., Inc.)
- *Pretend Soup and Other Real Recipes* by Mollie Katzen and Ann Henderson (Tricycle Press)

A GUIDE TO SNACKING

VEGETABLE PLATTER



pitted olives on carrot sticks ◆ cucumber slices ◆ avocado slices ◆ cherry tomatoes or tomato wedges ◆ broccoli or cauliflower florets

FRUIT BOWL

sliced apple with cheese slices ◆ melon balls ◆ canned pineapple slices (in its own juice) ◆ tangerine, orange, and grapefruit sections ◆ fresh seasonal fruits: peaches, plums, grapes

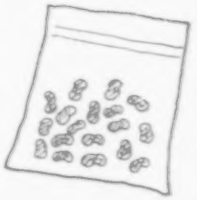
ON A PLATTER

granola bars ◆ hardboiled eggs ◆ nitrate free hot dog slices ◆ all kinds of cheese

BREAD BASKET

whole wheat bread sticks ◆ whole wheat matzoh ◆ rye crisp ◆ home made bran muffins ◆ flat sandwich pocket bread

IN BAGS



- raisins
- raisins and nuts
- sunflower seeds

IN CUPS

- salad
- jello cubes (made from fruit juice and gelatin)

NO MORE FOOD FIGHTS

by Sherry Burrell

Food fights between adults and very young children revolve around a power struggle. The question is whether the adult or the child is actually controlling what the child will and will not eat. Many adults feel strongly that it is their responsibility to control this aspect of a child's life. With the best of intentions, they try to insure a healthy nutritional balance for their growing children. If their intentions are so good, why do so many parents name "eating times" as one of the biggest sources of family conflict ?

Teachers of young children often deal with the side effects of these family struggles over food. Sometimes, young children are so accustomed to arguing about eating, that they will be very cautious about trying any new foods at school, will take far more than their share, will whine for food to be served in specific ways, will play with their food, will misbehave at the meal table, or will quite simply refuse to eat at all. Most teachers react in straightforward, unemotional ways, and this will very often avoid "food fights" between teachers and children at school. But when teachers set out to educate the parents of the young children about how to avoid food fights, everyone reaps the rewards.

EDUCATING PARENTS

Our society tends to be overly concerned about cleaning our plates, trying everything placed on the table, and filling our stomachs to capacity. When we're upset, we eat. When we're depressed, we eat. When we're happy and celebrating something special, we eat. When the clock says it's breakfast time, lunch time, or dinner time, we eat. When someone comes to visit us, we offer them food, and we eat with them. When we want people to feel loved and cared for, we offer them food. When we watch television, we eat.

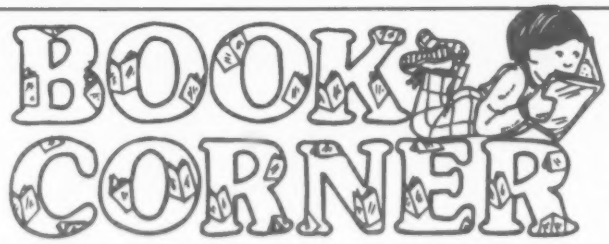
We have become an overweight society with emotionally charged messages about eating. Too many of our teenagers have developed eating disorders in which their reactions are to starve or purge their bodies of the food they are confused about whether or not they really need. Messages about body image, self image, and nutrition get all mixed up with all the psychological and emotional messages tied to food.

It's time for schools to work with parents to provide clear messages to children about food. It's time to cross "food fights" off the list of things that are the focus of power struggles between adults and children.

HEALTHY FOOD MESSAGES

- The purpose of eating is to provide the body with healthy nutrients which it needs to function effectively. When nutritionally deficient foods are offered first, they can fool the body into thinking its needs have been met, when they haven't.
- Not everyone's body processes or metabolizes food at the same rate, so not everyone is hungry at the same time.
- Taste buds mature and change as people grow and change. Not everyone likes the same tastes at the same times in their lives. For the most part, the taste buds will serve the needs of the body well. If your taste buds crave a certain (healthy) food, have faith in your body, and don't worry about each individual meal being totally "balanced."
- No amount of forcing, intimidating, threatening, bribing, or punishing will ever create lifelong habits of healthy eating patterns in anyone.
- People who have an opportunity to contribute to and become involved in making decisions about menus, purchasing, and preparing foods, and creating a mealtime atmosphere (centerpieces, candlelight, name cards, meal time prayers) often feel more invested in making meal times more pleasurable.

IN THE



TIME TO LOOK, TIME TO DREAM

by Karel Kilimnik

The day is too short. The day is too long. Whatever your opinion, it helps to provide regularly scheduled times for all of us. They give us a consistency and sense of stability.

Tana Hoban's new book, *Just Look* (Greenwillow), fits perfectly into observation time. We peer through a circle cut out at a photograph. Can you guess what it is? Turn the cut-out page to find the answer. On the next page, Hoban puts the object into perspective. For example, we peer at a brown object crossed with white stripes. A giraffe's body appears on the next page followed by a portrait of four giraffes grazing.

To extend the book, take a black piece of paper, cut out a medium sized hole and place it over the picture of a familiar object. You could collect pictures for thematic units for children to describe and identify.

Build time into your schedule for observing and discussing children's own growth. Margaret Miller has written *Now I'm Big* (Greenwillow) that introduces a group of ethnically diverse children as they reflect on what they could do as babies and what they can do now as young children.

Using a group photo, Miller highlights one child who then proceeds to describe something she did as a baby. Then she talks about what she can do now and how it is different. Each section of the text is accompanied with a photograph. One boy used to make messes as a baby and his Mom cleaned him up. Now he paints and sometimes gets messy but he cleans up himself.

This charming book can serve as a model for making a class book or mural describing childrens' growth and growing.

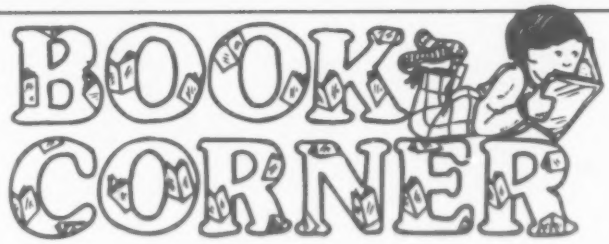
Dreams need to have a spot in the schedule, too. Without dreams and hopes, where would we be? *The Dream Jar* by Bonnie Pryor (Greenwillow) poses that question in this book for kindergarten and older children. Valentina's family emigrates to the United States from Russia around the turn of the century. They settle in a grimy, dark tenement where both parents work long hours to make enough money for their family to survive.

They turn a glass jar into a Dream Jar and everyone in the family contributes coins except Valentina who is too young to work. Until a way is found for her to help. She begins teaching her neighbors to read and write. Valentina's contribution is a very special one that enriches not only the Dream Jar but the people around her. What a powerful statement to make to young children that yes, they do have something to contribute. Create a Dream Jar in your class to save and help pay for something special!

There is also a time to reflect on your neighborhood—who lives there, what goes on, what it looks like, how you fit in. Eloise Greenfield gives us a special peek into nighttime in *Night on Neighborhood Street* (Puffin). This urban African-American neighborhood is viewed through the eyes of a child. It includes "Family Time" (a poem about the Robinson family's special time together), "When Tonya's Friends Came to Spend the Night" *("Her mama's more than just polite—She says she's glad they came to call—Tells them that she loves them all")* and "Karen" (who lets her sister *"be the mama when her Mama's at work.")*. This collection of poems deals realistically with children's feelings, fears, and observations of a neighborhood at night.

Use it as a starting point to observe the center's neighborhood, the people who live and work there, and their relationships to each other.

STILL IN THE



IT'S ALL IN A DAY...

by Sandra L. Malcolm

A typical school day for young children moves in and out of academic, social, physical, and emotional domains with fluency and rapidity. For academic, I present *Color Dance*; for physical *The Napping House*; for social *Snack Attack* and for emotional *Waiting for Mom*.

COLOR DANCE

by Ann Jonas (Greenwillow Books) uses four young dancers to take the reader into the world of color by showing how red, yellow and blue mix to create an array of new colors.

BEFORE READING, make a list of all the colors you can think of. Ask children, *"What if we only had three colors—red, yellow, and blue? Do you think the world would look different? How?"* Play music and encourage children to dance to the music. Add colored streamers as they move and dance.

AFTER READING, ask children what they now think about the world only having three colors. Have them tell you what they can do with these three colors.

ACTIVITIES

▲ Provide children with red, yellow, and blue plastic cellophane. Combine them in various ways to make new colors.

▲ Let children fingerpaint, using red, yellow and blue Encourage children to make discoveries about the colors.

▲ Begin with red, add small amounts at a time of white (black, gray). Observe the changes. Do the same with yellow and blue.

▲ Mix all the colors to make brown. Discuss what happens as you add each color.

▲ Write a class story about colors changing. Read other stories with similar themes. Suggested stories are: *Mouse Paint* by Ellen Stone Walsh (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) and *Little Blue and Little Yellow* by Leo Lionni (Scholastic).

THE NAPPING HOUSE

by Audrey Wood (Harcourt Brace) tells about all the creatures in Grandma's house trying to go to sleep. Everyone is successful except the wakeful flea who effects everyone else's sleep.

BEFORE READING, ask children, *" Why do people take naps?" ""Do animals nap?" "Why?"* What do children think a "napping house" would be?

AFTER READING, ask children, *"What did we find out about a napping house?" "Do you ever have a napping house? When? Is it the same or different than the napping house in our story? How?" "Why did the illustrator choose blue paper for the pictures?"*

ACTIVITIES

▲ Write a new class story titled *The Napping School*. What characters will it have? What will happen? Let children illlustrate the story.

▲ Make a tape recording of rain falling. Play the tape during naptime. Talk about the sound. What other sounds are good for sleeping? What sounds would be difficult to sleep to?

▲ Sing the song "I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly." Discuss the similarities in format between the song and the story.

▲ Re-read the story several times until children are comfortable with the repeat phrases. Encourage them to help you "read" the book.

SNACK ATTACK

by Lynette Ruschak (Simon and Schuster) follows the adventures of one young girl as she makes her way home from school to have a snack.

BEFORE READING, ask children *"What does it mean when we say we are going to have a snack?" "Do we have snack at school?" "Do you have a snack at home?" "What do we have for snacks?" "Do you think animals such as crocodiles, birds, or fish ever have a snack? What would they have for a snack?"* Show the book cover, and ask what the picture on the cover tells about the story.

AFTER READING, ask, *"Did the crocodile (bird, fish, lion) have a snack attack?" "Did they get a snack? Why not?" "How did the girl in our story get away from the crocodile (bird, fish, lion)?" "If she hadn't gotten away, what would have happened to her? " "Did the young girl have a snack attack?" "What did she do about it?"* Do children think she really ate all the animals?

ACTIVITIES

▲ Plan animal crackers and fish pretzels for snack.

▲ Using a box of animal crackers or a supply of animal pictures cut from magazines and calendars, encourage children to write pages for a class Snack Attack book. How could someone escape a snack attack of a bear (elephant, snake, tiger, etc...)?

▲ Re-read the story. Play-act the snack attack situations. Add new animals suggested by children.

▲ Develop a "snack attack" game to use as a transition from storytime to snack. *"When you hear the words, "snack attack," move to the table without being caught by the crocodile (bird, lion...)."*

WAITING FOR MOM

by Linda Wagner Taylor (Puffin Books) is about a young hippo who is worried when his mother is late picking him up after school. The book will help young children cope with similar circumstances in their lives.

BEFORE READING, have children close their eyes. Tell children to, *"Pretend it is time to go home from school, but your ride is not here. How do you feel? What would you do?" "Have you ever had to wait for someone to pick you up from somewhere?" "What did you do?"*

AFTER READING, ask children, *"Was there a good reason Mrs. Hippo was late?" "Why couldn't she call the school?" "How do you think Little Hippo felt when everyone else left and he was all alone?" "What reasons did Little Hippo think of for his mother being late?" "What people tried to help Little Hippo? What did they do?" "How did he keep busy waiting for his mother?" "Do you think he was glad to see his mother's car coming?" "Was his mother happy?" "How do you know?"*

ACTIVITIES

▲ Re-read the story. Act out what happens. What other things could Little Hippo do as he waits?

▲ Discuss the policy or procedures at your school if a parent is late. Help children feel secure in knowing they will not be left alone.

▲ Incorporate safety lessons reminding children not to talk to strangers; not to go home with anyone else unless instructed by your parents, and so on.

▲ Make a class mural showing the things Little Hippo did as he waited. Write dictated captions under each picture or have children write about their picture.

▲ Make a class big book with pictures and stories by children of what they would do and how they would feel waiting for Mom.

TIME TO GO HOME

by Karen Stephens

Just as smooth arrivals are important to start the day off right and bridge the gap between home and school, smooth departures are equally important as children cross that bridge back home from school. Here are some suggestions to make the school day end well.

- **End-of-the-day activities should be soothing and relaxing for children.** If late afternoon or early evening activities are too exciting or stimulating, children are likely to cry simply out of frustration when parents arrive. And while a parent may be relieved their child is having fun at school, they can't help but feel a bit rejected when their child cries upon their arrival.
- **Utilize the predictable activities in the daily schedule.** Good-bye songs, end-of-the-day "helper charts" for chores, or story time are frequently used as ways to signal children that the end of the day is approaching.
- **Staff should be available to talk individually with parents and child at departure times.** Encourage children to tell their parent about their day. For instance, a teacher may remind a child their morning art project is waiting in their cubby for their parent to admire.
- **Encourage rituals.** Rituals may be different for each family. Some parents may sit and play with Legos before helping their child get items from their cubby in preparation for going home. Others may read a story or paint a picture for their child at the art easel.

Some children keep their stuffed animals for naptime in their cubby. Just before children leave, encourage them to say goodnight and sweet dreams to their animals. This helps them "shift gears" from the school mode to the home mode.

- **Alert children to when their parents will start arriving.** This is especially important if a parent is arriving earlier or later than usual. Otherwise children are taken off guard by a change in schedule.

At the end of the day, some teachers play a particular song on the phonograph or CD player. Others dim lights and put a spotlight on themselves as they read a final story to the group. In half day programs, snack time is often the signal that the end of the day is approaching.

- **Be sure to say good-bye to each and every child and wish them a good night.** Kindness goes a long way toward helping children cope and adjust to a world in which they often feel insignificant and powerless.

TIME FOR ME!

by Mary Beth Spann Minucci

When I first started working with children, I tried my best to be a super-teacher. Each day, I was the first one to pull into the school parking lot and the last one to leave. During the day, I did not rest. While other teachers gathered in the lounge for coffee and relaxation, I changed bulletin boards, organized papers, and restocked learning centers. While others talked shop over brown-bag lunches or strolled together around the school playground, I clapped erasers, mixed play clay, and worked on polishing my parent newsletter. My teacher friends always enjoyed their breaks; I never rested. They seemed to enjoy their days while I never felt finished or satisfied. *"How do they do it?"* I wondered. *"How do they manage to be good teachers and still find time to sit still during the day?"*

Finally, my workaholic mentality came to an end one muggy June day. It was after-hours on the last day of school. Everybody was getting ready to party at our annual end-of-the-year faculty bash. Everybody, that is, except me. Instead of looking forward to sipping sparkling punch and sampling fancy finger sandwiches, I stood mopping sweat from my face as I tacked up September bulletin boards. Nothing like getting ahead, I told myself as I forced my tired body to work on.

Afterwards, I felt deprived for having missed the party. The time had come when I could no longer ignore the lunacy of my never-rest work ethic. And the following September, when my prepared bulletin boards didn't help me feel any happier, I decided for sure that I wanted to begin taking time to smell the coffee. I'll admit part of me was afraid that if I dared to relax a bit, my class would fall to pieces. But that's not what happened at all. Even though I began actually taking breaks and using my lunch period to bolt a sandwich, nothing bad happened. My teaching didn't suffer, my bulletin boards didn't fade or fall down, and my newsletter still went home (almost always) on time. Plus, because I was now allowing myself a chance to connect with colleagues, I felt refreshed, and school was once again a fun place to work. By slowing down, I managed to trade working hard for working smart.

Sometimes I still have to fight the urge to spend all my time trying to do it all perfectly. But then I remind myself to take time for me. Only then do I end up with more energy than ever to give to my kids.

If you see yourself in my tale of over-achievement, here are some tips to balance your act:

Remind yourself that children would rather have a relaxed and happy adult at the helm than a stressed-out perfectionist.

Remember too, that when you take time to chat with co-workers, you are actually giving yourself the opportunity to learn from their successes and mistakes. Learning from others is an important part of becoming the best you can be.

Don't be afraid to share the workload. Instead of doing it all yourself, try asking working for parent volunteers willing to help you design a flannelboard story or cut out 15 paper bunny stick puppets.

Keep in mind that teaching is not a contest or a race. Working yourself to a frazzle will not win you any ribbons and will not necessarily make you a better teacher or person.

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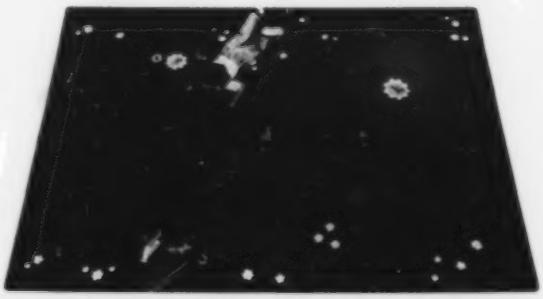

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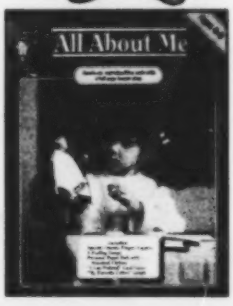

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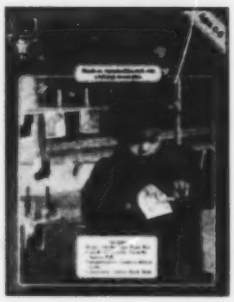

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Peace and Goodwill

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- Learning to Work Together
- Creating a Peaceful Classroom
- Young Class Mediators
- Expert Advice on Tattletalers
- Helping in the Community
- "The World in Our Backyard" Day
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Lisa L. Durkin, Editor 10/15/96

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Publisher and Editor-in-Chief ..... **Lisa Lyons Durkin**

Art Director ..... **Debby Dixler**
Editorial and Content Advisors ..... **Kathy Faggella, Mary Beth Spann Minucci**
Contributing Designers ..... **Nina and John Woldin**
Logo Design ..... **Gene Krackehl**
Contributing Photographer ..... **Peter Lewin**
Production ..... **Nina Woldin and Debby Dixler**
Editorial Assistant ..... **Christine Manavian,**
Advertising Inquiries..... **1-800-781-7275**

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

by Lisa Lyons Durkin

This is the season when everyone talks about peace and goodwill. These are difficult concepts for young children to understand intellectually. But it's very possible to introduce age-appropriate concepts such as cooperation and sharing that will lead to a peaceful classroom where everyone feels a sense of goodwill. This is the theme of your *First Teacher* this month.

Jeannine Perez begins by discussing how even toddlers can begin to learn about caring and sharing through stories and dramatic play. She points out how important it is to model caring, respectful interactions for your children at all times. Karen Stephens talks more specifically about role modeling respect with pre-schoolers especially around issues of cultural prejudice and physical differences.

There are many suggestions related to creating a "peaceful classroom" including scheduling, room arrangement, and even materials that promote peaceful interactions between children. The article "Learning to Work Together" deals with setting up cooperative learning situations in the different centers in your class.

Conflict resolution would seem to be a far too sophisticated concept for young children however there are ways to break the process into steps that even pre-schoolers can manage with some guidance from a caring adult. Sherry Burrell and Karin-Leigh Spicer offer two different approaches that you can try in your classroom. It's never too soon to start training peacemakers for the 21st century!

The centerfold in this issue is dedicated to the creating of works of art with the theme of peace. During this season, when the emphasis is on giving and receiving gifts, it's refreshing to intersperse some activities where the shared experience is most important. They include recipes and language activities.

Of course, this is a season for celebration. So why not plan a festive occasion that brings together families and the community to teach children tolerance and an appreciation of the cultures that make up their world. You'll find out how in "The World in Our Backyard," an article by Tania Cowling.

The issue ends with suggestions for saying "thank you" in original ways. This is one of the first social phrases that a child learns ("*Ta-ta.*") It's never too soon to begin teaching respect and caring—these lead us to peace and goodwill. Happy holidays from everyone at *First Teacher*!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

✏ New contributing author, **Dr. Susanna "Susy" Duckworth** is a professor at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, SC. She teaches Special Education courses including Early Childhood Special Ed. Susy, appointed by Governor Beasley of South Carolina, serves as the Chairperson of the SC Interagency Coordinating Council for Children Birth-Two Years with Disabilities.

✏ **Susan Root** owns two preschools in Pennsylvania, one of which also has a daycare center. Susan also teaches parttime at Luzerne County Community College and does childcare training workshops throughout her state. She has four sons: Michael,17; Brian,15; Matthew,12; and David,3.

✏ Longtime contributor, **Sherry Burrell**, now teaches third grade using many of the early childhood techniques that she has described over the years in *First Teacher*. Sherry has four children: Joshua,17; Emily,15; Jeremy,11; and Erin,10.

PHOTO CREDITS

Peter Lewin: cover, 7, 13, 15, 32, 33, 35

ART CREDITS

Beth Ann Bispham: page16

Debby Dixler: pages 19-22, 23, 26, 31, 35

Janet McDonnell: pages 8, 9

Catherine Minor: pages 6, 7, 11, 29

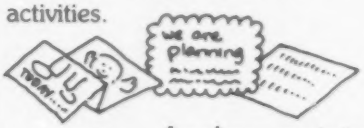
Nina Woldin: pages 5, 18, 24, 25

HELPFUL HINTS

GOODWILL FOR ALL

by Gail P. Jones

Creating "peace and goodwill in the classroom begins with a curriculum that addresses the issue and a partnership with parents. Make sure your curriculum includes opportunities for peace-making and problem-solving skills in the daily plans. Help children and parents see the need for such activities.

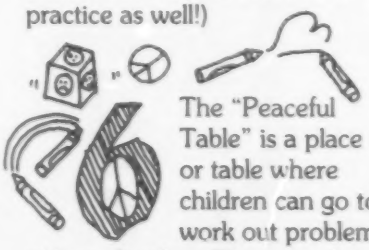


Involve parents in planning and participating in all school activities. Use a parent-teacher organization, regular newsletters with opportunities for open communication, and daily information exchange.

A "graffiti board" near the door, illustrated by children at the end of the day, is a great simple way to let parents know "what we did today"! (It also helps with closure and review). This is also a good time to learn from children if there are any new class problems that need to be addressed soon.

Young children need help in learning the words to resolve conflicts, express feelings, and solve problems. Plan activities that help them learn the words needed and be a good role model!

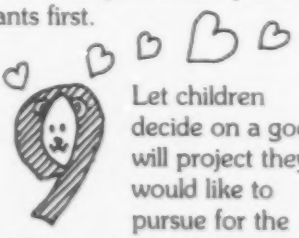
Conflict resolutions skills need to be practiced. Using puppets, stories, child demonstrations and skits all work well in both child /child conflicts and adult /child conflicts. (You will benefit from adult/adult conflict resolution practice as well!)



The "Peaceful Table" is a place or table where children can go to work out problems with each other. There can be puppets available for role-playing, paper and crayons for drawing pictures of "How I feel," "How you looked when I did that," etc. You might include a cardboard cube with feeling faces on it and/or a cube with pictures of situations and / or solutions on it to roll in helping children resolve the problem. A tape player can be available for taking turns in expressing opinions and observations.

To help children become aware of the similarities as well as the differences between themselves and others, play "I Spy" noting all of the above. Many times, children will be surprised that they have more in common than they realized!

Preschoolers often have problems sharing. If two children are going to play with the small blocks, for example, let one child divide the blocks into two "equal" piles and let the *other* child pick which pile she wants first.



Let children decide on a goodwill project they would like to pursue for the holiday season, and perhaps, all year. If economics are a problem, choose something such as a neighborhood cleanup, senior citizen visit, or wildlife preservation project.

TODDLER TIME

FIRST STEPS IN SHARING AND CARING

by Jeannine Perez

People used to believe that the universe revolved around the earth. Toddlers are still sure that the world they know centers around them, and it is as unnatural for very young children to be aware of the needs of others as it is for pigs to fly! Linda and Richard Eyre compare a young child's self-centeredness to being "surrounded by mirrors" in *Teaching Your Children Values* (Simon and Schuster). Sharing with and caring about others is a trait that is learned, much as young children learn to accept new foods, situations, and places. It is a part of growing up. Toddlers are eager to learn socialization skills however, and we can teach these skills in ordinary day-to-day activities; through stories, art, music, and our own actions and responses to situations.

BE AWARE OF FEELINGS

Sharing and caring cannot begin until we become aware of others. I believe this awareness begins with a sense of self and the ability to identify and describe feelings. When we become aware of our own feelings, we begin to realize that others have the same feelings.

There are many songs, poems, and stories that focus on feelings. The simplest ones are usually toddler favorites.

If You're Happy and You Know It

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.
If you're happy and you know it,
Then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.
(unknown)

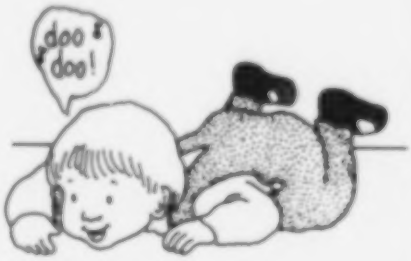
Use this favorite and familiar song and change the words to act out different feelings.

- *If you're sad and you know it...*
- *If you're angry and you know it...*
- *If you're scared and you know it...*
- *If you're surprised and you know it...*
- *If you're silly and you know it...*
- *If you're sleepy and you know it...*
- *If you're tired and you know it...*

MODELING

Example is always the most effective and positive teaching strategy. Children imitate what they see much more readily than what they hear. In other words, **do rather than say!** Loud voices, confusion, and anger are contagious, and so are happiness, generosity, and serenity. If you can remain calm through chaos, your children will reflect your peaceful attitude. When all else fails, we have a "Quiet Contest," to see who can keep voice and body still for the longest time.

Demonstrate alternative ways to cope with angry feelings. Young children are fascinated with numbers and counting. Make the most of this interest in other ways by showing them that counting to ten or reciting the alphabet can be more fun than getting angry when blocks are knocked down or someone else chooses your favorite toy. Be sure to count out loud. It's also good practice for later math.



USE STORIES, MUSIC, AND DRAMA

Appeal to toddler's imagination through stories, role-playing, and games. We like to take turns during group time acting out feelings. *"Show me with your face that you feel happy." "Show me with your whole body that you are REALLY angry." "Show me with the way you move that you are surprised."*

Read *Feelings* by Aliki (Mulberry) and *Honey, I Love and Other Love Poems* by Eloise Greenfield (Harper & Row) and then expand vocabulary by describing the emotions seen in the illustrations. Affirm that everyone has feelings and that it's OK to feel anger, sadness, fear, and jealousy. Cut out magazine illustrations that show different feelings, and talk about them. Then ask open-ended questions: *"How do you think the girl in this picture feels? Is it OK to feel that way?"* Also explore the cause for some feelings. *"Why do you think this boy is angry?"*

TAKING TURNS

It is natural for several young children to want to play with or do the same thing at the same time. Talk about taking turns and sharing and how happy it makes others when everyone takes turns fairly. Begin by practicing taking short turns in play and games. Offer praise whenever you see demonstrations of fairness and turn taking happening during the day. Using an egg timer gives children concrete time segments for taking turns.

GAMES

- Turn a game into lessons in good manners. Play a game of *Magic Tag*. Whenever someone is caught, they must say *"Abracadabra."* Then tell children that they can learn other magic words that work even more quickly: *"Please," "Thank you," and "Excuse me."* Practice saying them in games and in real life situations.
- Divide children into small groups to make instruments for an orchestra. Each child makes a sound that can be easily repeated. Appoint one child to be the conductor who points to each instrument in turn and then all as a group. Talk about the beautiful sounds that cooperation builds.

As teachers, we can have no goal more important than helping children develop values that will aid them in shaping a good life for themselves and with others.

LEARNING TO WORK TOGETHER

by Barbara F. Backer

The young child is naturally egocentric. He identifies people and things in the world by how they relate to him.

"What can I do with that?"
"What can that do for me?"
"What can that person do for me?"

When we provide activities specifically designed for two children working together, we help them think in terms of how they can help each other. Try these ideas to help your children develop cooperation skills.

ART CENTER

Place two easels side-by-side. Send children to the easels in pairs. (Children can choose partners, if they wish.) Tell children that they will be cooperating while they paint. Have them watch you set a timer for two minutes. Each child paints at his own easel until the two minutes are up. Then they change places and paint on each other's pictures. Set the timer again, and after two minutes, have children change places again. When the paintings are finished, put both children's names on both pictures. Let children decide who takes home each paper.

BLOCK CENTER

When a child chooses to go to the block center, encourage him to select a friend to go with him. Each child selects blocks, trucks, etc. for the other child to play with. They can build/play together or separately.

MUSIC TIME

First, have children look in a mirror to see how the mirror's image mimics everything they do. Now have all children pretend they are your mirror. Move slowly while they copy your movements, then move more quickly.

Now pair children and assign one to be the mirror. One child mimics all movements made by his partner. Change so that the mirror becomes the leader and the first "mover" becomes the mirror.

After older children gain experience with this activity, put two pairs together. One pair is "mirror" for the other. This increases cooperation and concentration.

OUTSIDE TIME

- Encourage children to take turns pushing each other on the swing.
- Let one child hold a timer while his friend rides the tricycle. When the time is up, they change places and the rider now times his friend.

SNACK TIME

- Place an assortment of crackers and spreads (peanut butter, jelly, cheese) on the snack table. Encourage each child to prepare a snack for a friend. Monitor to see that each child gets one snack!
- Pair children. Give each pair several wedges of apple and several wedges of pear. Give one child a small cup with 1 tablespoon of raisins in it and the other child a cup with 2 tablespoons of shredded coconut. (Use other fruits in season.) With plastic knives, have children cut the apples and pears and put them in a bowl. They add the dried fruits, stir, then spoon the mixture into two paper cups. Each child gets one cup of fruit for snack.

DRAMATIC PLAY CENTER

It's fun to let a child select dress-up clothes for another child to wear. Encourage pairs or small groups of children to design outfits for each other this way. Use an instant-developing camera to record the results.

GAMES CENTER

Try a new approach to board games. Put several game pieces at the starting place. All players can move any piece. The object of the game is to get all pieces to the end of the game board path. When every piece is at the end, all players win.

Remember that it is normal for children younger than three to play beside their friends, not with them. This is called *parallel play*. These young children should not be expected to "cooperate" and work together toward a common end. Older children, however, enjoy these activities. Encouraged to work and play together in a supportive atmosphere, they learn to get along peacefully.

A CLASSROOM AT PEACE

by Susan Entz

Does a peaceful classroom sound like an oxymoron? It's not. The way we set up the classroom, the schedule, and the rules impacts our ability to maximize cooperation and to minimize conflict. These basic procedures also help children develop the self-control needed to function successfully in society.

RULES

Rules enable people to live and work together harmoniously in a safe environment. Rules are statements of expectations, defining the boundaries of acceptable behavior. When developed cooperatively and enforced consistently, rules help chilc' en regulate their own behavior.

RULES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN SHOULD:

▶ **Be Developmentally Appropriate** A rule should be within the child's ability to understand and comply. (For example: *Respect each other* is too abstract for two year olds.)

▶ **Be Reasonable** Children comply more often when they understand the need for a rule. Develop the habit of explaining the reason as you remind children of a rule. (*"Speak with an inside voice when working. It's hard for others to concentrate when someone shouts."*)

▶ **Be Few in Number** Have few enough rules so young children can remember them. Have only those needed to make the day run smoothly.

▶ **Be Stated Positively** Give children guidelines for positive behavior, rather than a laundry list of don't's. (*"Walk to the bus,"* rather than, *"Don't run."*)

▶ **Involve Children** Misbehavior in certain situations can be anticipated. Meet as a group to discuss anticipated problems. Children comply more often with a rule when they are involved in its development.

▶ **Use Logical Consequences** Logical consequences are those that people set up and agree to ahead of time. They agree that if A occurs, B will happen as a result. Involve the group in developing group consequences for predictable problems. For example, they might decide that if a child pushes when lining up to go on an outing, she must go to the back of the line.

▶ **Be Posted** The written word is powerful. Illustrate and post the class rules and refer to them as needed.

▶ **Teach Children Negotiation Skills** Show children how to use words to resolve their conflicts. First acknowledge each child's feeling and position. Help them explore the options and the consequences of each option. Have children decide on a course of action, try it out, and then evaluate it.

▶ **Be Consistent and Fair** Consistent enforcement of the rules helps children learn that their behavior leads to predictable responses.

SCHEDULE

A balanced schedule is a guidance tool, providing a sense of security and boundaries in time. It gives the child the feeling that, *"I know what will happen today."*

Here are some scheduling tips.

▶ **Have a consistent schedule.** It is better to shorten each period slightly than eliminate a part of the day. Incorporate special activities into your regular schedule rather than turning the day upside down.

▶ **Get the wiggles out.** Plan opportunities for physical activity and quiet time throughout the day.

▶ **The younger the child, the shorter the large group activity should be.**

▶ **Schedule enough time** for children to become really involved in an activity.

▶ **Plan for transitions.** Most misbehavior occurs between activities. (For example, dismiss children in small groups. *"All*

Show children how to use words.

TIPS FOR CREATING A PEACEFUL CLASSROOM

Have duplicates of popular toys and materials.

Have a well-placed quiet center.

Get the wiggles out!

Provide enough space for "elbow" room.

birds" wearing red clothing may fly to the bathroom to wash their hands for snack.")

ROOM ARRANGEMENT

Many guidance problems can be anticipated and avoided by rearranging your room.

▶ Avoid furniture arrangements that create "running paths." These invite racing around and loud noise.

▶ Provide enough space. People in tight quarters tend to become irritable and defend their space.

▶ Arrange space so that children can work without being interrupted by others.

▶ Set up activity centers that are physically separated from each other so children don't become overwhelmed by the group size. This also helps to avoid "spill over" of negative behavior from one location to another.

▶ Avoid placing a quiet center next to noisy activities.

▶ Arrange the room so you can see all areas at a glance.

MATERIALS

▶ Teach children to respect materials. Let them know how you expect them to use toys and classroom equipment. Don't assume that they will know what to do with them.

▶ Have duplicates or multiple copies of popular materials and equipment to avoid arguments.

▶ Label storage shelves with words and pictures so children can get materials and return them to their proper place independently.

▶ Remove broken or damaged materials that could be used as "weapons."

▶ Have enough materials so that children will be actively engaged, but not so many that they become overwhelmed.

▶ ENJOY THE PEACE!

YOUNG CLASS MEDIATORS

by Sherry Burrell

"Mine!" "I had it first!" "Gimmee that!" Ear-piercing cries sometimes fill our classrooms as young children struggle with conflicts between their own egocentricity and the rules of fair play. Because we deal with the very young child, the "nature of the beast" automatically implies that it will be difficult for an upset child to see someone else's point of view. In every classroom, when conflicts arise, teachers are challenged to help children learn social skills that will enable them to "get along" with others. When the early childhood curriculum includes specific activities that address these issues, it helps children learn how to support one another when these conflicts arise.

When two children are crying or screaming at one another, they both need comfort, understanding, and support. They need to feel "heard," and they need to know that the adults in the room will keep them safe. Teachers sometimes feel as if they spend far too much classroom time arbitrating fights between children, but developing social skills is an important focus of a young child's learning experience. When a teacher delivers a gentle, but firm, message about what's fair and what's not, it shows children that it is very important to learn how to get along with others. What are the best steps to take when children disagree? What activities can be planned that will teach children the skills they will need to work out conflicts successfully?

IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT

"In the heat of the moment," in the midst of the raging battle, your first steps must always be to "make both children feel safe." Stop the physical part of the fight by removing one or both children, removing the object of contention, or by stepping between the two. (If either child is so upset that he has to be calmed down, let him regain control, then return to the original spot where the conflict occurred, and take up the issue again.)

The next step is called "defining the problem." By this time, both children should be calmed down and both should be focused on you. (Later, as children gain skill in arbitrating their own problems, children can and should be taught to talk directly to each other.) Listen to each child tell his side of the story. This could be as simple as, *"Me want that toy"* from both children, or might include long explanations about why it's *"not fair."*

Too often, we, teachers, skip this "working it out" step. We are busy, so we simply solve the problem for the children by putting the toy in question out of sight, deciding who will "be first" (usually the one who will start screaming again if he's not first), or by making a quick judgement as to "who is right," and moving on. While this method may resolve the problem for the moment, it does nothing to teach children the social skills they will need to succeed in all social situations. As part of this step, ask each child what he thinks would be the fairest thing to do. Often some excellent suggestions are made, and the children come to an agreement. Just as often, especially when children are new to this process, both children's response is a silent stare or a shrug of the shoulders. When children who were screaming indignantly just moments before decide to become totally nonverbal during this step in the process, just have some suggestions ready, and ask for a nod to indicate a willingness to abide by the decision being suggested. Once an agreement is made, be sure to include the final step. Thank both children for doing such a good job of solving their problems, and move on. Congratu-

lating children shows them that they will solve their problems again in the future. When teachers model this "mediation" process over and over again, those demonstrations become the basis for a curriculum that teaches children how to become mediators for one another.

YOUNG CLASS MEDIATORS

At what point can children themselves begin to become the class mediators? When the curriculum includes "peacemaking" activities designed to teach children the steps listed above, even very young children can begin to learn to carry them out. Even in a class of three year olds, the designated "class mediator" for the day can work alongside you. Include that "third party" in each step of the process, as it seems appropriate. There are several activities that might help prepare children for this "mediator" job.

☺ Be sure that every adult in the classroom models the process!

☺ Include a "child mediator" as an observer in the process until he is ready to become involved in it. Walk your "observer" through each step by telling him what you are doing next.

☺ Use circle time or a dramatic play center to practice role playing common situations that cause arguments in your classroom. This is an especially valuable activity because no child is involved in an actual conflict during a pretend role playing session. Children who normally would never get involved in any conflicts at all have the opportunity to practice standing up for themselves (or for others), and children who are often "in the heat of the battle" get to practice similar battles when they're not actually upset about anything.

☺ Be careful not to allow a class mediator to become involved in any conflict in which one or both children are "out of control." Young mediators deal with smaller, less threatening situations only!

☺ As the young mediator is ready, walk him through each step by telling him what to say next, giving him suggestions for solutions, and supporting the important job he is doing.

☺ Plan activities that will teach children to assess the fairness of various play situations. Develop picture posters depicting potential problem situations, or write up "problem cards" (each with a short description of a problem situation on it). Encourage children to tell a story about what they think is going on, how the children might be feeling, and how they think the problem could be solved. Write the stories down for children, tape record them, or have children draw pictures about them.

☺ Use story time to include books about characters in conflict. Encourage discussion!

☺ In the math center, have children "vote" by putting a happy (fair) or sad (unfair) face on a chart to indicate whether or not they think a certain situation (maybe one that came up in story time) is fair or not fair. Encourage them to tell why they think as they do.

☺ Involve parents in the learning process by keeping them well informed about your "mediation curriculum." When parents are supporting the same messages as teachers, children learn much more effectively!

As children become more and more familiar with the steps in the mediation process, they begin to carry them out on their own! As children turn five, six, or seven years old, and they begin to pride themselves in being able to solve their own problems without the mediator, it becomes clear that the process is working! Who knows?

Maybe your children will become the next generation's negotiators for world peace!

EXPERT ADVICE: TATTLING

by Mary Beth Spann Minucci

"Oh yeah? Well, I'm tellin'!!! "

Sound familiar? At one time or another, most young children feel the need to tattle. And tattling drives most adults batty—me included. Now, I'm the type of parent that prides myself on respecting children's feelings and understanding that little kids are still learning how to manage behavior when things don't go their way. Still, tattling brings out the worst in me. Just the thought of those little scrunched-up faces whining (again and again and again) about how some other kid did this or didn't do that, and I can sense a tension headache seeping up the back of my neck and taking a stranglehold at my temples.

I always begin with such clear resolve and good intentions. What goes wrong? I start out by saying: *"I can see you're upset. Try working it out yourself."* (They're back in three seconds flat. They can't work it out because the other kid is *"too mean."*)

Soon, I feel myself slipping: *"Are you back again? I told you to just stay away from him. Now only come to me if it's really, really important."* (They bounce back in three seconds, this time with imaginary boo-boos requiring a high-intensity microscope to locate.)

Finally, I give up: *"That's it! I'm out of patience! I told you I was busy!"* (They never leave.)

OK, I admit I am not the best at dealing with tattling. But neither are the other mothers in the neighborhood.

- *"I tell them to knock it off before I count to three,"* says one.
- *"I tell them to call me when there's blood, "* says another.
- *"I wouldn't do that,"* declares a third. *"I tell them to be to be nice or they won't have any friends. Then I make them apologize."*
- *"I just send everybody home,"* sniffs a fourth. *"It works for me."*

But those answers don't work for me. Desperate for solutions I could live with, I turned to parenting expert, Adele Faber, co-author, with Elaine Mazlish, of many parenting books including my favorite, the classic *How to Talk So Children Listen and Listen So Children Talk (Avon Books)*, and their newest collaboration, *How to Talk So Kids Can Learn—at Home and in School (Rawson Associates)*. Here's what Faber had to say about dealing with your little taletellers:

"We tend to see the tattling child as a 'nasty little informant' with bad motives," says Faber. *"And we want to show our disapproval by accusing them of tattling, refusing to listen and hoping the children and their problems will disappear. I think, instead, our first step should be to get rid of the labels. When we tell children they are tattling and dub them 'tattlers,' we are telling them they cannot ever turn to authority for help in solving problems. And young children need to know they can gain access to a responsible adult when they are in trouble."*

Faber says that when it comes to dealing with children's reports, it's important to assess the type of problem so we can respond appropriately. She cites four basic situations in which children usually feel the need to tell, and different ways we might react to each one.

BONA FIDE EMERGENCIES

Children need to know we want them to come to us for help when health or safety is truly at risk. Our responses can offer reassurance and support. (*"I'm so glad you told me about Andrew unlocking our playground gate. Thank you for helping us all to stay safe."*)

MINI-DISASTERS

When the paint spills, the juice drips, or the sink overflows, children are quick to point fingers. Their need is not so much to get other children in trouble as it is to get us to see them as helpers who come to the rescue. We can respond to such reports in matter-of-fact ways that address the problems without faulting anyone. (*"What a spill! Quick, let's all get some rags and sponges before the paint gets tracked across the floor."*)

HELP ME COPE

Sometimes children really do need help and direction in solving their own problems. When they report on another child's negative or aggressive behavior, you can empathize, then directing their efforts back to their peers by providing them the words they need: *"You don't like that. Kicking hurts. You can tell Carly, 'I don't like to be kicked. Tell me what you want with words , not kicks.' "* If the child returns after trying to solve the problem himself, you can accompany the victim back, using your power of authority to put an end to the antisocial behavior. (*"Carly, I just heard Brian say he doesn't want to be kicked. If you are upset with Brian, use your words to tell him what's bothering you."*) You may need to follow this up with a problem-solving session by stating each child's point of view and asking them to figure out a solution that's fair.

HE'S BAD! I'M GOOD!

Sometimes children's reports about others are nothing more than bids for our approval and attention. On some level, the child believes, *"If I can make the other kid look bad, then I'll look good by comparison."* And sometimes, we inadvertently reward this erroneous belief. When Sarah says, *"Josh didn't wash his hands,"* instead of reprimanding Josh (*"Josh! How many times do I have to tell you to wash your hands before you eat?"*), we can respond in a way that satisfies Sarah's need for attention while discouraging unnecessary reporting about others. By saying something like, *"I'm not comfortable hearing about what Josh is or isn't doing, but I would love to hear what's going on with you,"* gives Sarah the attention she craves —not for being better than anyone else—but just for being herself.

TOGETHER AT CIRCLE

by Susan M. Root

Helping children develop positive social relationships is an important task for teachers and caregivers. These relationships can grow and develop through planned teacher directed activities as well. Bev Bos in *Together We're Better* (Turn the Page Press) suggests the term "coactive" learning for tasks that encourage two or more children to work together. She feels that it is extremely important to get children interacting and playing with each other in a positive way at an early age in order to help them develop social skills.

During circle time, songs can be sung that get children involved with each other. For example, "Itsy Bitsy Spider" is a popular children's song to sing with a group as children do actions to accompany the song. To make it a "coactive" experience, change your focus slightly by asking children to pair up, with one being the spider and the other being the spout. Now children are using eye contact, cooperation, and positive interaction to accomplish a task in a fun way. These skills help them become more socially competent.

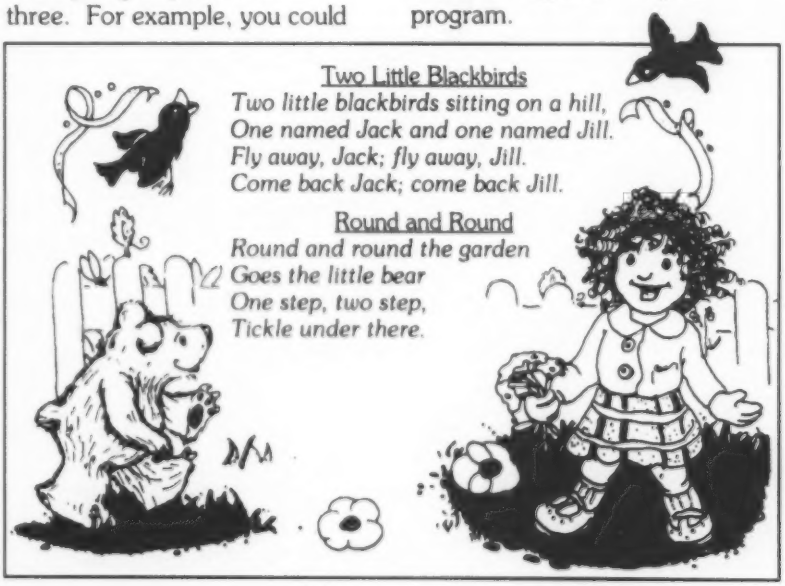
Two other fingerplays which also work well for "coactive" learning are described in this article.

In "Two Little Blackbirds," one child can be the "hill" and the other child can be the two blackbirds. Again, make sure children are familiar with the words and actions by having them do it individually first.

In "Round and Round," the "garden" is the palm of the hand and the "little bear" is an index finger. Children take turns being the bear and the garden and enjoy tickling each other under the arm or chin. Lots of laughter will be heard as children have fun with this song.

Transitions from circle time can also help children develop positive relationships with other children. Think of having children move to the next activity in groups of two or three. For example, you could say, *"Pick a friend and introduce her to the group before you wash your hands for snack."* A child could respond by saying, *"This is Sarah and she likes to play with blocks."* Or, all children wearing "red" could make a "red train" and choo-choo to the next activity. Transition times then become social experiences as children say each other's names or cooperate to move as a group.

Whether it's play time, circle time, or a transition time, children can be developing social skills. As Bev Bos says, *"By ourselves, we're good, but together we are better."* Think of ways that you can get children "together" in your program.



Two Little Blackbirds

Two little blackbirds sitting on a hill,
One named Jack and one named Jill.
Fly away, Jack; fly away, Jill.
Come back Jack; come back Jill.

Round and Round

Round and round the garden
Goes the little bear
One step, two step,
Tickle under there.

SOLVING CONFLICT

by Karin-Leigh Spicer

Conflict exists between children when they are committed to incompatible courses of action, goals, or attitudes, beliefs and values. When properly managed, conflict can be a constructive social enterprise. Children need to practice and see others deal with conflict constructively. If conflict is avoided altogether in the classroom, children do not learn team work, respect for differences of opinions, or develop interpersonal relationships. Children can actually start to view others as adversaries, limiting communication and acting hostile towards one another.

A simple process can be taught to young learners to help them resolve conflict. First, each child involved in the conflict sits down and communicates her concerns by answering four questions:

1. What do I want?
2. What do we want together?
3. What can we do?
4. What will we do?

During this process, young learners are not allowed to make threatening comments about each other—name calling, blaming. Children focus on strategies designed to maximize the gains and minimize the losses of all children involved. For example, Lauren and Shannon-Kate are fighting over who uses the swing at recess.

Lauren: *"I want to use the swing."*

Shannon-Kate: *"I want to use the swing."*

Lauren and Shannon-Kate: *"We both want to* use the swing."

Lauren: *"We could use it every other day."*

Shannon-Kate: *"I could use it for ten minutes and Lauren could use it for ten minutes."*

Lauren and Shannon-Kate: *"We will take ten minute turns on the swings."*

These questions should be posted in the classroom where every young learner can see them. Throughout the school year, you and your children should role play different types of conflict using the four questions to help them find solutions. Use examples that happen frequently in class—not sharing toys, pushing to be the first in line, hitting. At first, explain how each question should be answered. Afterwards, ask children how to answer the questions to reinforce their understanding.

Question One looks at what each child wants. Children should communicate their intentions to each other. This can help each one to understand the reason for their actions. **Question Two** looks for similarities in what both children want. Usually, **Question Three** is the most difficult to answer. This question looks for all possible solutions to the conflict or brainstorming. With this question, children have to go beyond satisfying their own needs when they look for solutions that will also benefit the other child.

At first, you may need to give suggestions. **Question Four** allows children to agree on one of the suggestions and then implement it. After this process, have them get together and talk about how the agreed upon solution is working.

This simple activity in negotiation and compromise helps young learners articulate their feelings and opinions without whining. It avoids placing children in a win-lose situation— a situation that can be very difficult for young children to handle. Over time and with practice, many children will learn to resolve simple conflicts on their own without your intervention.

THE FAMILY BULLETIN BOARD

by Gail P. Jones

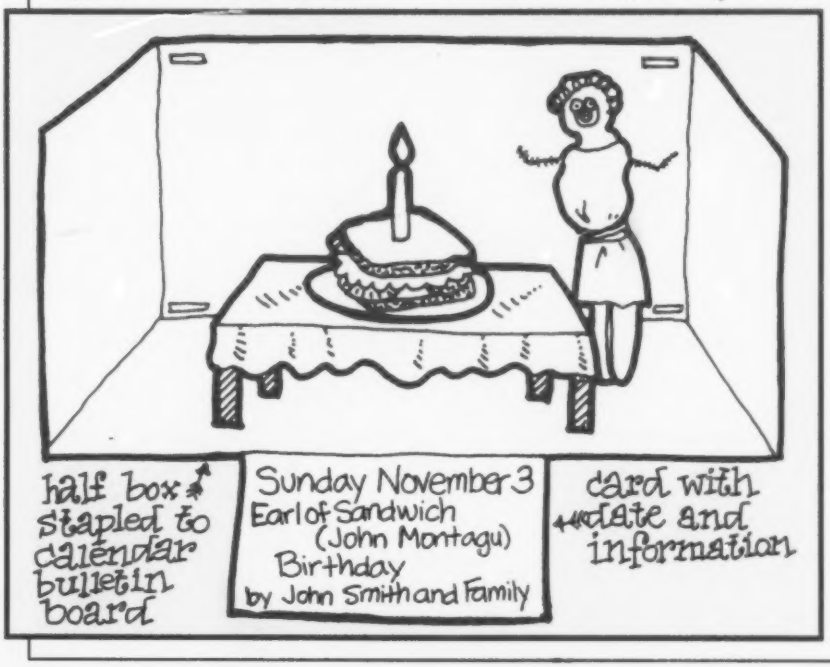
Would you like to create a spectacular bulletin board for the month of November or December that will be unlike any you've done before and that will involve every child and family in the class? This can be done at any time but November and December are family gathering months so it seems even more appropriate.

Each child with his family decorates (in a 3-D lightweight manner) a half box lid or bottom (provided by the teacher for uniformity) for a specific day in the month as shown below. It works best to let the families sign up for the day they wish to contribute. Any special birthdays or celebrations for the children involved can be acknowledged.

Plan the size of the box halves and numbers so that each will fit on the bulletin board being used. I used Teacher Book Club boxes alternating days with half bottoms and half tops so that they fit on an 8'x3' board with six-inch side borders. The boxes were open at the top and secured to the bulletin board with a staple gun or thumbtacks. The bulletin board becomes the calendar for the month. Let the class work on the letters in the month's title and the days of the week. November can be uniquely spelled out with fall materials such corn kernels, dried leaves, etc. Each box should have a small card attached when it is completed with the number of the date and the special day illustrated by whom. For example, Sunday, November 3rd would have a card attached that might read:

3—Earl of Sandwich (John Montagu) **birthday** by **John Smith and family**

The days that remain after all have been chosen can be illustrated by the whole class, center directors, or special class friends such as music teachers. Encourage the use of lightweight materials and creativity! Our parents and children loved this project and all the boxes were distributed and returned after one weekend! Our bulletin board was in the main hall of the school so we visited it daily to learn what special day it was and to admire the creativity of each person involved. Many compliments came from others as well and that really boosted the children's self-esteem! If you think the December calendar might be better, why not have each family do a holiday or celebration they can illustrate. Add the international holidays for an in-class project and learning experience.



Goodwill Crafts and Recipes

The Art Of Peace

by Jeannine Perez

What better way to practice peace, than through our own expressions in art? Art is a powerful way to respond creatively to problems and joys in everyday life. Use these activities as stepping stones for your own ideas in cooperative art that encourages children to look beyond themselves and appreciate individuality and diversity in thinking.

Art Partnerships

☮ This activity improves each time it's done. Children work with partners. One partner describes what to draw (including colors, shapes, size, etc.) while the other draws the picture as described on a large sheet of paper. Good communication skills are needed for this activity! When the drawing is done, change roles. Remind children that no criticizing is allowed. Later, talk about all the ways to communicate and cooperate.

☮ Make a peace chain. Cut many strips of bright-colored construction paper, one for each link in the chain. (Make them all the same width and length or vary sizes for a modern looking chain). Ask children to write their names on strips before putting them together in a chain. If you have time and enough help, encourage each child to think a moment and then dictate one thing they could do to help bring peace and happiness to home and school. Write their promises on a strip. Read all the promises at group time before fastening them to the chain. Ask children to work together to make the chain long enough to reach across the room. Even better, work with other classes to form a chain of peace that enriches the school.

Peace Cookies to Share

You'll Need: 1 1/2 cup margarine or shortening ◆ 2 1/2 cups brown sugar ◆ 2 eggs ◆ 2/3 cup milk ◆ 3 teaspoons vanilla ◆1 teaspoon baking soda ◆1/2 teaspoon salt ◆ 6 cups oatmeal ◆ 2 cups flour

What to Do:

1. In a large bowl (or dishpan), cream together 1 1/2 cup margarine or shortening and 2 1/2 cups brown sugar.

2. Taking turns with a wooden spoon, beat in 2 eggs, 2/3 cup milk, 3 teaspoons vanilla (the dough will look curdled).

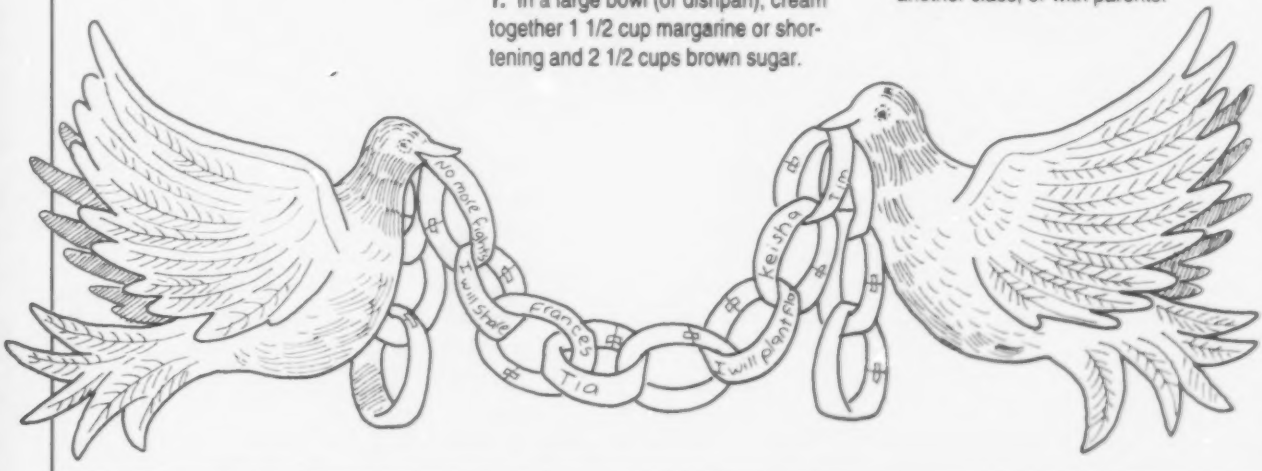
3. In another bowl, stir together 1 teaspoon baking soda, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 6 cups oatmeal, and 2 cups flour.

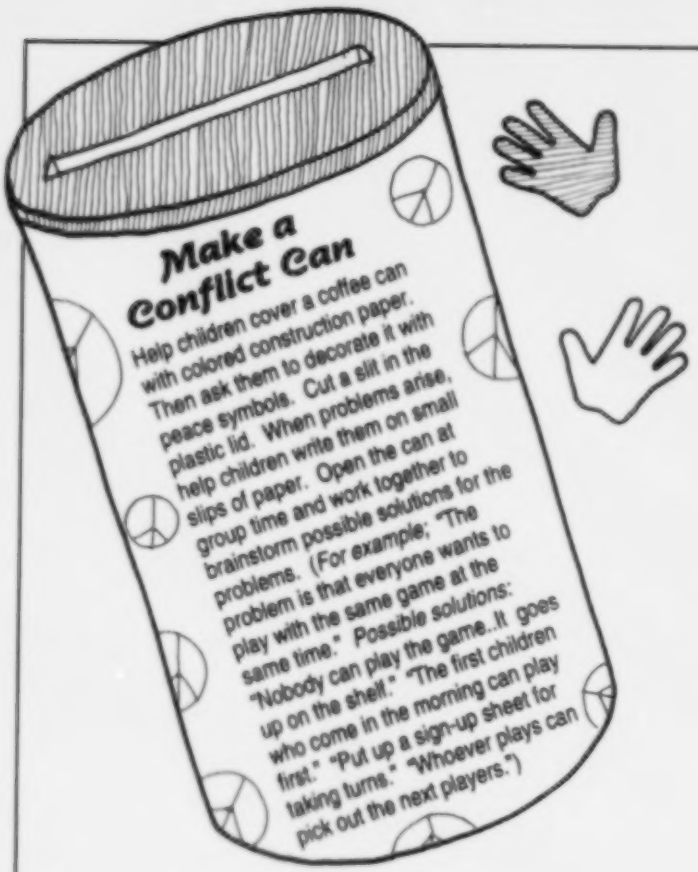
4. Gradually stir into egg mixture.

5. Chill several hours.

6. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto a greased cookie sheet. Flatten each cookie with the bottom of a glass dipped in sugar. Encourage each child to decorate (before baking) a cookie for someone else to eat. We used raisins, chocolate chips, and small chocolate candies designs to make each cookie special.

7. Bake at 350°F for about 12-15 minutes. (Makes about 5 dozen cookies.) Enjoy at snacktime, with another class, or with parents.



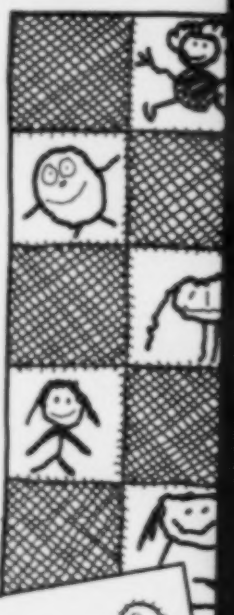


Make a Conflict Can

Help children cover a coffee can with colored construction paper. Then ask them to decorate it with peace symbols. Cut a slit in the plastic lid. When problems arise, help children write them on small slips of paper. Open the can at group time and work together to brainstorm possible solutions for the problems. (For example; "The problem is that everyone wants to play with the same game at the same time." Possible solutions: "Nobody can play the game..It goes up on the shelf." "The first children who come in the morning can play first." "Put up a sign-up sheet for taking turns." "Whoever plays can pick out the next players.")

Friendship Quilt

Make a friendship quilt from red and white paper or fabric. Ask each child to draw a self-portrait on paper or with markers or paint on white fabric. Stitch the fabric squares together (alternating with red squares), and back with another fabric (perhaps a print or a plaid) for a spectacular wall hanging, or staple paper squares in a geometric or Native American design onto a bulletin board. (*Note:* Making a quilt from fabric squares is a big job unless you enlist the help of parents or other adults. You might plan a potluck sewing bee and invite families.) You might alternate portrait squares with handprint squares. Read *The Patchwork Quilt* by Valerie Flourney (Dial), and talk about the comfort and security of quilts made by loving hands.



Art from Faraway Places

Make a storycloth from a yard of heavy material like canvas or denim. Help children draw or cut fabric characters from favorite folk tales. Sew or glue them around the edges of the storycloth. Use the pictures as props to remember folk tales or to make up new stories.

Words and Pictures

☮Talk about promises of peace at group time. Let children brainstorm their own ideas. Here is a sample of a peace treaty.

We are children of the earth and this school.
We want peace in the world starting now!
We want to share food and work and play together, and take care of flowers and animals.
And everyone should laugh at least once a day!

Write the words in the center of a white posterboard, and have children draw a border of pictures to illustrate.

☮Make a peace collage, by looking for interesting pictures in old magazines. Talk about the pictures and photos of families and caring acts. Ask: *"How do these pictures make you feel? How do pictures that show violence make you feel?"* Then glue the pictures to a large sheet of paper, adding more and more pictures until the paper is covered. Help each child put together his collage of pictures that make him feel peaceful.

Set Up an Art Gallery

Set up a theme of Peace. Show children a print of *The Peaceable Kingdom* by Edward Hicks. Ask children to draw their own pictures depicting peace. Hang all drawings from a rope with clip clothespins and invite another class or parents to the art show. Everyone who draws is a winner in this contest.

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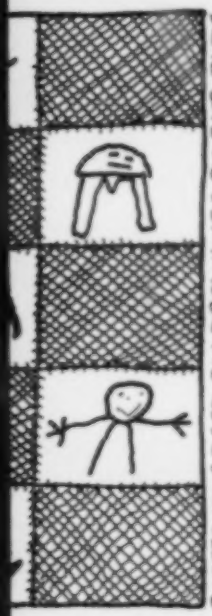

PORTRAITS BASED ON DRAWINGS BY 3YR OLDS RAINBOW MONTESSORI SCHOOL MADISON, NJ

Bulletin Boards

We made an eye-catching bulletin board that reminded us of the beauty of peace each time we looked at it. We first covered the board with pale blue paper, painted darker blue and mountain shapes about one third of the way up, then sponged some fluffy clouds above our mountains. Using white construction paper, we folded and cut a doubled white dove shape, and stapled one side to the sky background so that the bird stood out in relief. (If you have no pattern, you can trace around a hand, then fold three fingers down for wings, and use the little finger for a tail.) I asked the boys and girls to draw full figured self-portraits, and we cut them out and attached around the bottom and one side as a very personalized border.

SPONGE-PAINTED CLOUDS

DOVE

CHILD-CREATED SELF PORTRAITS

Hands Around The World

Children love to trace around their hands on paper. You can use these paper hands, all unique and different, in your art. Draw or paint large rainbows on paper and glue hands across the bottom. Work together to paint continents on a large blue circle of paper or posterboard (or a large ball for three-dimensional effect), encircling the hands around the earth. Hang your replica of the earth from the ceiling. A large map of the world mounted on a bulletin board gives still another perception of the world with paper hands clasped all around the board as a border.

Community Art

Expand on the idea of classroom window art, and volunteer your class' talents to decorate a window in a store or office in your community, either by painting a picture on the window, or by decorating a white posterboard with ideas of peace, and posting it in the window.

Window Art

Working together and sharing ideas are important concepts to learn. Painting windows and glass doors with bright colors of tempera paint mixed with detergent and a little water is a great way to use the cooperative talents of your children to create works of art. Be sure to get permission first. Cleaning the windows later is a messy job! Begin with a theme. Favorite books like *The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs (Random House) or *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats (Viking) can provide mid-winter ideas, or you may wish to share a summery book like *Picnic* by Emily Arnold McCully, and add a sunny landscape to your winter room. If you begin with a theme, give each child enough time and space to incorporate individual ideas.

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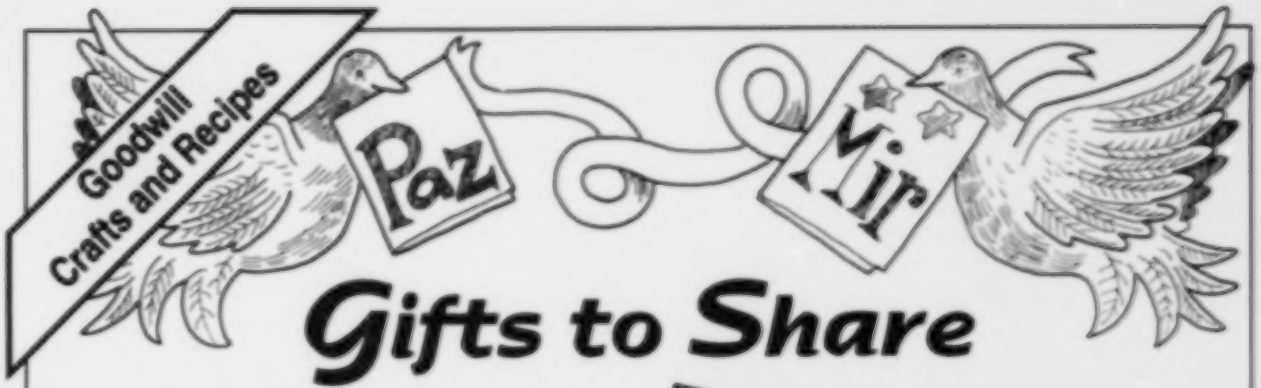
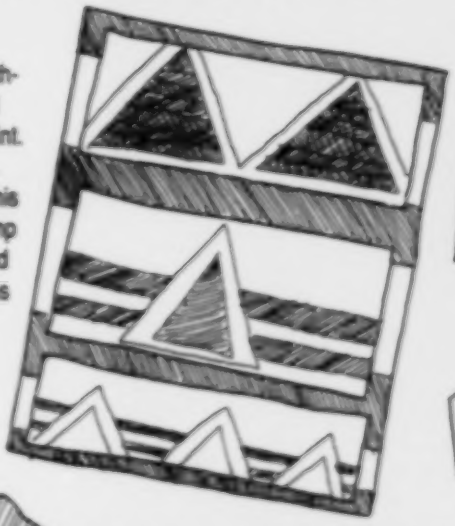
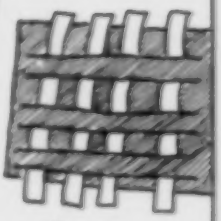
Goodwill Crafts and Recipes



Gifts to Share

Create your own wrapping paper for holiday gifts by borrowing designs from Navajo blankets found in the Southwest. Use large sheets of newsprint and stamped-printed rectangles in rows across the paper with gray tempera paint. Then decorate by drawing stripes and triangles on and around the rectangles with black and red paints. Adapt this idea to African art by creating curved repeat motifs in stamp designs. For these motifs you can use spools, small round lids, plastic forks (both handles and tines), and the bottoms of worn-out markers as stampers.





Peace Paz

Cards can echo our holiday peace ideas. Older children can copy the word *peace* in many languages (*mir, paz, shalom, malu, sunan*) on their folded cards. Others draw pictures of doves, of children playing together, and other joyous pictures that celebrate holiday caring.

Malu

Talk about colors associated with different cultural winter holidays, and use them in making cards, gift paper, and gift collages (boxes covered with overlapping scraps of colored paper, then brushed with a solution of white glue and water). We associate the colors red and green with Christmas, blue and white with Hanukkah, and red, green and black with Kwanzaa. Gift projects might also include laminated woven paper placemats in appropriate colors, dreidels made from small boxes and a pencil, or bread dough rolled into strips, formed in cat shapes, and baked for a parent breakfast celebrating St. Lucia Day.

Ask children to design Peace Awards on rectangles of colored posterboard. Creative illustrations suggesting peace and cooperation can be drawn around a line across the center of each card. Stack the rainbow colored cards in a handy place and make each child a "deputy," looking for chances to award a peaceful deed. Write the name of each recipient on their award.

"No peace in the world without peace in the nation,
No peace in the nation without peace in the town,
No peace in the town without peace in the home/school,
No peace in the home without peace in the heart."
(Tao Te Ching)

HOW WE CAN HELP

by Margery A. Kranyik

How about a new motto for your class: *"How can we help?"* Most of us encourage children to be good friends and helpers to one another, but let's look beyond the classroom and family and into the community. How **can** we help?

Preschoolers are not too young to be turned on to the needs of others. Civil service **can** begin with them. Take some time to determine social service and civic organizations in your community that will welcome and encourage your participation.

❤ **Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes** Most of these facilities have an activities' director available to coordinate events with members of the community. Find out if your class can make holiday favors, placemats, or seasonal decorations. Decorate a tree, plant some flowers. Intergenerational projects have value for all. Being with the aged in a social setting will help children to understand that aging is merely another stage of life and is not necessarily scary or threatening. Being around children will help foster a youthful attitude among the residents. Ask if your children can perform fingerplays, action songs, or instrumental pieces. You will be surprised at the amount of audience participation! Take along enough drums, shakers, and rhythm sticks! If the residents are mobile, the activities' director may be willing to reciprocate by having some folks visit your school and be entertained there.

❤ **Exhibits** Let's display some of those creative projects we do daily. Have an art exhibit. Invite community members, friends, and parents to your school to view children's work. Have an open house in the evening so working families can come and enjoy the art show. Don't forget to invite the press to stimulate public relations!

❤ **Special Events** Many communities have activities that lend themselves to remembrances. Plant a tree in memory or honor of a special person or event...or, of course, for Arbor Day. Invite community leaders and families to participate. Let people out there know about you!

❤ **Environmental Awareness** Clean up your neighborhood. Set aside a special day where everyone, armed with trash bags, goes out to pick up trash. Preface the event by discussing the importance of preserving the environment. Follow up with a chart story and pictures that you send to your mayor, selectman, or environmental officials.

❤ **Fund-raising** Many community civic, social and human service groups conduct fund raisers and "awareness" events. Find out which group in your area would welcome contributions by young children. If on-site participation is not possible, invite a member of the group to come and talk to your class about their cause. Perhaps your contribution can be a poster or mural to publicize the special event. Check to see if your town has a Lions Club, Kiwanis, or other service-related group that would welcome your help.

❤ **Parades** Everyone loves a parade! See if your group can participate in a community parade. Remember...you, your staff, and families are the children's best advocates. Find a donor and driver of a flatbed truck, sign up chaperones, dress up the children, and reach out to celebrate your community.

IN THE

FRIENDSHIP: THE HEART OF GOODWILL

by Sandra L. Malcolm

The holiday season is an excellent time to encourage children to think about the value of friendship. Sometimes we get too involved in our own wishes during this time and forget to be kind to others. The books selected for this Book Corner will help focus discussions and activities around friendship and what that means.

KATHARINE'S DOLL

by Elizabeth Winthrop (E.P. Dutton) tells the story about a gift that changes the friendship between two young girls.

BEFORE READING, bring in several large packages wrapped as gifts. Have children predict what might be in each. Discuss reasons why people give and receive gifts. Allow time for children to talk about a favorite gift. Ask, *"How do you think a gift could cause two people not to be friends anymore?"*

AFTER READING, ask if children have ever gotten a gift they thought they liked more than anything else in the world? Have them tell you about it. Do children think they have the same love for gifts as they do for people? Why? How is it different? Did the girls "make up" at the end of the story and have peace between them? How do we know things will be all right between them?

ACTIVITIES

▲ Provide jump ropes for children to work cooperatively. Teach several jump rope songs and rhymes.

▲ Provide dolls in the play center for children to share.

▲ In the writing center, have materials available for children to share.

▲ Provide materials to make Thank You cards for gifts received.

▲ Discuss and act out situations in which friends disagree. What feelings are expressed? How could people stay friends or become friends again after a disagreement?

THANK YOU, SANTA

by Margaret Wild (Scholastic) is about a young girl who writes a letter to Santa each month beginning in January. Santa responds every month.

BEFORE READING, share two letters with the class that represent typical pen-pal letters. Discuss the letters and what it means to be a pen-pal. Ask, *"Who would you like to write letters to? Why?"* Show a globe. Point out the U.S. (and where you live), the North and South poles, Australia, and other places of interest to children.

AFTER READING, ask: *"Do you think it was unusual for someone to write to Santa after Christmas? Why?" "What kind of things did Santa and Samantha write about in their letters?" "How did Samantha make a snowstorm after her mother said it probably wouldn't snow this year?"* Discuss the differences between summer and winter in Australia and the North Pole.

ACTIVITIES

▲ Encourage children to become pen-pals with someone in the room (or in another room). Provide materials at the writing center for this purpose. Develop a mail system for the pen-pals with children.

▲ Study Australia through reading other stories, looking at books, maps, and posters. Study the North Pole. Compare the two locations.

▲ Pretend you are Emperor penguins. See who can balance a ball on their feet the longest.

TEDDY'S CHRISTMAS GIFT

by Jan Mogensen (Garth Stevens Publishing) is about a small teddy bear and a blackbird that team up to make a young girl's Christmas wish come true.

BEFORE READING, ask children: *"If you had one Christmas wish what would it be?"* (Make a list of the responses) *"When we talk about 'characters' in a story, what do we mean?"* The characters in this story are Norah (a young girl), a teddy bear, and a black bird. What do children think the story could be about?

AFTER READING, ask children, *"What was Norah's Christmas wish? Did it come true? How?" "How was Teddy a friend to the blackbird? To Norah?" "Why did the blackbird take Teddy to his special place?" "What does it mean to show goodwill toward someone? Did the characters in the story show goodwill? How?"*

ACTIVITIES

▲ Encourage children to create a story about their holiday wish. Make a variety of media available for children to write, draw, or record their stories.

▲ Provide puppet-making materials for those children interested in making the characters to retell the story.

▲ Add bird feeders to your school yard to practice goodwill toward wildlife.

▲ Practice letter writing by encouraging children to write Thank You letters to Teddy from Norah; from Teddy to the blackbird; from the blackbird to Teddy.

▲ Discuss caring for injured wildlife (do's & don'ts; safety, etc.) Invite a specialist in to talk with children. Encourage role-playing with stuffed animals.

BEST FRIENDS WEAR PINK TUTUS

by Sheri Brownrigg (Scholastic Cartwheel Books) convinces the reader that sometimes staying best friends means more than getting the leading part in *The Nutcracker*. Amanda and Emily think so.

BEFORE READING, play the music from *The Nutcracker* and if possible show parts of a video of the ballet. Encourage children to dance to the music. Discuss what a *tutu* is. Show one if possible to the class.

AFTER READING, ask children; *"Was our story about best friends? Was it about pink tutus? How did the title fit the story?" "What did Emily mean when she said 'Sometimes being your best friend is hard'?" "What happened when they tried not to be best friends?" "Why didn't either Emily or Amanda get chosen to be Marie?" "Did they make mistakes on purpose or were they accidents?"*

ACTIVITIES

▲ Replay the music and the video of *The Nutcracker*. Again encourage children to dance to the music.

▲ Provide crepe paper tutus for those children who wish to wear them.

▲ When friends have a disagreement then make-up they are said to have made peace with each other. Amanda and Emily made peace and continued being best friends. Write your own story about friends making peace. Make a class big book about being friends.

▲ Play "What if....." with children. What if Amanda had been chosen to be Marie? What if Emily had been chosen to be Marie? What if there could be only one snowflake?

▲ If possible, take a field trip to see a performance of *The Nutcracker*.

▲ Create your own version of *The Nutcracker* and invite others to come see it.

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STILL IN THE BOOK CORNER

PICTURE BOOKS ABOUT PEACE

by Paula Gaj Sitarz

The characters in these picture books set fine examples for young children. They are kind, considerate, cooperative, tolerant, and accepting.

Sally, a young girl in *I Know a Lady* by Charlotte Zolotow (Greenwillow) lovingly describes an elderly lady in her neighborhood. Sally appreciates all the small gestures the lady makes year round to her and the other children and animals. The lady's smiles, flowers, and waves make Sally feel special.

Victoria and Sam are about to share the cookies Mother made in *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins (Mulberry Books) when two friends arrive. When more and more children visit, they must continue to divide the cookies evenly until each child has one cookie. Fortunately the doorbell rings one final time and it's Grandma with a huge batch of cookies.

Young Alfie makes a personal sacrifice to help another child feel better in *Alfie Gives a Hand* by Shirley Hughes (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books). Alfie is apprehensive when he attends his first birthday party without his mother so he brings his old blanket and holds it tightly. When the birthday boy, Bernard, gets out of hand, makes Min cry and not want to join in the games, Alfie puts down his blanket, holds hands with Min, and draws her into the game.

Angelina and Alice achieve gymnastics feats through cooperation and teamwork in Katherine Holabird's book (Clarkson N. Potter, Inc.). Angelina and Alice work well together until Angelina falls over while trying to do a handstand, the other children laugh, and Alice runs off to play with them. Ultimately Alice asks Angelina to be her gymnastics partner and she gives Angelina helpful pointers on how to do a handstand. By working hard together the girls do an impressive balancing act at the village festival.

Miriam Cohen's many picture books about first graders treat the themes of this issue with sensitivity and truthfulness. In *It's George!* (Greenwillow Books), the first graders know that George isn't the smartest student in the class, but he is helpful, reliable, and kind. George's classmates gain an even greater appreciation for him when they see George interviewed on the television news for dialing 911 when his elderly friend needed emergency help.

Brown writes many stories about Arthur, the aardvark, that are set in a school and deal with sensitive issues. In *Arthur's Thanksgiving* (Little, Brown) Arthur discovers that directing the school's Thanksgiving play is not easy. No one wants to be the turkey. When it really matters, however, Arthur's friends help him. They all dress up as the Thanksgiving turkey.

Kevin Henkes writes with feeling and understanding about children and their relationships with others. In *Chester's Way* (Greenwillow), children meet Chester and Wilson, best friends who do everything the same way, together, and always with thought for the other's feelings. Then Lily moves into the neighborhood and she has her own way of doing things—very different from Wilson and Chester's way. The boys are leery of Lily until she frightens some older boys away from them. That's when Wilson and Chester give Lily a chance, get to know her, and learn to respect and like her for her individuality.

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BOOKS TEACH RESPECT

by Karel Kilimnik

Respect. The basic foundation supporting everything else. It starts with self-respect; then respect for others, respect for others' cultures and traditions, and includes respect for the environment. As early childhood educators, we work with young children to help develop all these different types of respect. These books deal with various aspects of respect.

SELF-RESPECT

In *Tommy's Mommy's Fish* by Nancy Dingman Watson (Viking), it is birthday time for Tommy's Mom and he really wants to give her a special gift just from him. His older siblings are each making a gift from their Cape Cod environment and each one invites Tommy to help and then give the gift together. Tommy is very clear that the gift must come from him alone. His brother and sisters respect his wish. Tommy decides he wants to catch a striped bass for her special birthday gift.

He persists in fishing even as night descends. His siblings come down to the beach to encourage Tommy to join in the birthday party. Tommy refuses to join them until he accomplishes his goal. The party is sweeter as Tommy shares the gift he worked so hard to get.

RESPECT FOR OTHER CULTURES

Respect for cultural traditions different than yours is something to be learned and shared.

La Boda. A Mexican Wedding Celebration by Nancy Van Laan (Little, Brown) focuses on the wedding tradition of the Zapotecs who live in Oaxaca, Mexico. A glossary along with an introduction provides cultural information. Van Laan's text incorporates Spanish and also provides the English translation.

Children can begin to see similarities—a wedding is a time for families to gather, a time for wedding vows to be exchanged, and a time to celebrate. Van Laan introduces us to the Zapotec wedding traditions in order from coming into church to the fireworks afterwards to the house "covered with flowers from the mountains" where the eating takes place.

The Day Gogo Went to Vote by Elinor Batezat Sisulu (Little, Brown) also has a Glossary and Pronounciation Guide. Before sharing this book with children, it would be helpful to let them know the significance of April 26, 1994, the first time that Black people could vote in their own country. It would also be helpful to tell them about Nelson Mandela, the first Black president of South Africa.

Gogo is a Zulu word for grandmother. In this story, a child accompanies her 100-year-old gogo on her first trip to the voting place. This momentous event is seen through the eyes of a six year old, Gogo's great granddaughter.

To compliment these two books, I would suggest inviting family members in to talk about their wedding and voting experiences. Ask them to bring in pictures, a voter registration card and anything else that would help the children understand their traditions more fully.

RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Sierra Club has been publishing childrens' books to help develop and nurture respect for the environment. One of these books is *Dancers in the Garden* by Joanne Ryder is a lovingly crafted ode to those tiny flashes of color, hummingbirds. The warmth of the sun awakens the hummingbird. Dancing its way from flower to flower, stopping for a quick bath, gathering feathers and grass for a nest. The hummingbird is in constant motion until the sun sets. We witness the interdependence of the hummingbird, flowers, insects, and the sun as the hummingbird makes its way through the day.

ROLE MODEL RESPECT

by Karen Stephens

The most effective way children learn to respect themselves and others is by watching the important adults in their lives act respectfully. In terms of influencing children's behavior, the familiar computer adage "*What you see is what you get*" can be paraphrased to: "*What **children** see is what **you** get!*"

As children spend more time in day care and pre-kindergarten programs, teachers are in a pivotal role to influence children's ability to respond gracefully and creatively to diversity, whether it be cultural, racial, religious, age, or related to those with special needs. Our goal should not be only to tolerate differences in people, but also to rejoice in them. We should concentrate on making the most of our differences so they can contribute to the quality of everyone's life on Earth. If we fail to do so, our children are the ultimate losers...And we shortchange ourselves greatly in the process as well.

As we do when setting goals for any curriculum development, it's good to start with a self-assessment of your classroom and your teaching methods. Your classroom environment, and the tone of your personal interactions with each and every child—public as well as private interactions—will set the standards for respectable behavior. Respect is made VISIBLE AND TANGIBLE by modeling it in your behavior and creating an acceptant, diverse classroom environment.

WHAT CHILDREN THINK ABOUT DIFFERENCES

Whether children learn it at home, on the playground, or from movies or the television, you are bound to encounter children who have already, at the tender age of three, adopted biases. You will also have children who ask blunt, frank questions about those differences JUST BECAUSE THEY ARE CURIOUS.

It's important NOT to think a child is racist simply because she is trying to come to grips with the fact that humans come in varying colors! Responding to biased and/or curious children is often a prickly dilemma for teachers. Often, rather than responding, teachers ignore prejudiced comments, pretending they didn't hear them. To the child, this often implies agreement with their expressed point of view!

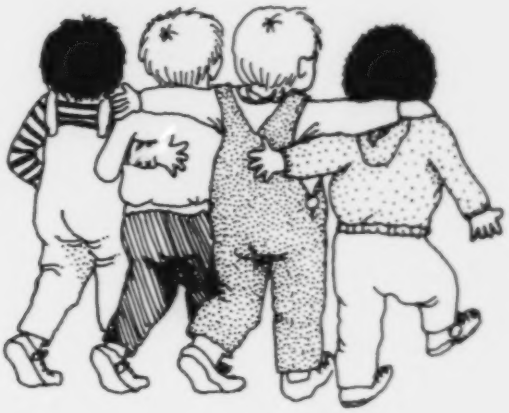
Other times, teachers overreact to a child's biased comment and try to shame them into retracting the statement, "*Oh, Lydia, that's terrible to say Hiso's eyes are slanted. His eyes are just as good as yours and I don't want to hear another word about it. Where on earth did you learn that anyway?*" This response is not helpful or enlightening to the child. In fact, it conveys that differences are taboo topics, rather than characteristics to be recognized, discussed, and appreciated.

Following are some guidelines for responding to children's blunt, usually innocent, comments about differences. I hope they help you the next time a child stumps you with one of the honest questions only kids can come up with!

◆ React non-judgmentally and unemotionally. Respond with kindness and respect.

◆ Anticipate situations you might encounter with children. You can then prepare yourself to react as is deemed best by the situation. Remember, there is never only one right way to respond to a child's statement or question! It's important to be a REAL person with children, not a parrot mimicking responses you learned in a book.

◆ Present factual information when appropriate. For instance, if a child is called a "wop" you can say, "*Tony's parents are Italian. That means they come from a*



country far away called Italy. Wop is not the word they like to be called. It's a word someone made up to make Italians feel badly."

◆Focus on feelings. Help children understand how their behavior affects others. Focus on how behaviors can either help or hurt a friendship. *"It doesn't look like calling Tara names is getting her to share with you. What's another way to get Tara to share Legos?"*

◆Focus on reinforcing social skills. *"I love to see everyone in the classroom cooperating!"*

◆Don't accept behavior that is motivated by bias. Basic ground rules help express your lack of tolerance for prejudice. For instance, basic rules may include: children *and teachers* may not name call; toys belong to everyone; children may play in any learning center as long as there is room (IMPLYING: children may not be excluded because they are different or unpopular.)

◆Be prepared to state your beliefs, but do not try to convince a child to agree with you. Avoid preaching and lecturing. When discussing differences, always focus on children's concrete, firsthand experiences. A comment such as *"How would you feel if Terry called you that?"* is often fruitless. Research shows children under the age of six have a very hard time seeing things from another person's perspective.

HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND?

◆Monica says, *"Gram told me never to play with Manuel 'cause he came from Mexico."*

How would you respond? You might be tempted to "lecture" by telling Monica her Gram is rude, bigoted, and a bad person. This only exacerbates the situation. Your goal should be to help Monica think for herself BASED ON HER EXPERIENCES WITH MANUEL.

You might respond in any of the following ways.

▲ *"Oh, I didn't know your Gram knew Manuel. Tell me what* ***you*** *like about playing with him."*

▲ *"Your Gram is correct, Manuel is from Mexico. Why would that be a reason not to play with him?"*

▲ *"Sounds to me like you are wondering if your Gram has the right idea? What do you think of playing with Manuel?"*

▲ *"Well, that's an interesting comment. How do you go about deciding who to play with?"*

◆Marta says, *"Kona has 'chink eyes.'"* Possible teacher responses include the following:

▲ *"Kona's eyes are almond shaped, just like her mom and dad's. It hurts people's feelings when you call them names like 'chink eyes.'"*

▲ *"Kona, tell Marta how you feel when he calls you 'chink eyes'."*

▲ *"Marta, what does 'chink eyes' mean to you? What's another way to describe Kona's eyes?"*

▲ *"Marta, it seems like you are making fun of the shape of Kona's eyes. Why?"*

▲ *"It's hard for a person to be friends with you Marta if you tease them. Personally, I find Kona's eyes beautiful."*

▲ *"Marta, I see tears in Kona's eyes. I think you have hurt her feelings. If you want to keep her as a friend, you'll want to think of a way to show her you are sorry."*

MULTICULTURALISM, PEACE, AND GOODWILL

by Terry Norton and Susy Duckworth

Johnny can't read, and Katasha has a speech problem. Lau is from Taiwan, and Chi Chi from Mexico. Freddie belongs to the B'hai faith, and Lynn's mother lives with her significant other, a woman named Marge.

You need to help children understand differences (and similarities) so that they may learn to accept others and to get along. In this way, teachers will foster peace and goodwill in their classrooms.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Each child has unique learning needs, so you should find out as much as possible about children as individuals.

- Some children in a class may not talk as plainly as others the same age. A helpful technique is for these youngsters to use a tape recorder. They can then listen to themselves saying words which may be poorly articulated. These are words that children can work on pronouncing more clearly. A further suggestion is for children to play "talk" games. The simple game "May I?" gives students an excellent opportunity to put in order words used to ask permission. *"May I go to the restroom?"* is one example. Your response, *"Yes, you may,"* will in turn reinforce correct word sequencing and will model appropriate social behavior. When children understand another person's speech, they are more likely to talk. Talking is an important part of friendship.
- You should also be inquisitive about how different youngsters learn. Asking questions about when and where they learn is very appropriate. Some may learn best during circle time; others, when playing alone in the sandbox.
- Another point to consider is how children solve problems. For instance, noticing how a child answers questions, whether quickly or slowly, whether the responses are appropriate or inappropriate, indicates how long it takes to process information. You can adjust time for individual children accordingly.
- Still another consideration is how long youngsters take to tell how they feel about things like playing in the art center. This information may reveal something about the emotions they bring to learning situations. Understanding oneself is a start in understanding others. This helps, too, in getting students to reflect about how they learn best. As a result, they may begin to take ownership for their learning, something very important throughout life.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Besides observing how children learn, you should study children's cultural differences in the classroom. By embracing these, you can promote goodwill among youngsters. For instance, they can be taught early to tolerate different religious beliefs and practices. If there are students of various faiths in a class, you should treat each one with dignity and respect. If given time to talk about their different backgrounds, children can develop respect as they learn more about their fellow classmates.

Also guide children toward seeing that no one belongs to a single cultural group. A person may be a member of many groups, religious or otherwise. One may be Catholic as well as white, black, or Asian.

One caution: however, in teaching about different cultures. Avoid emphasizing heroes and holidays which make minorities seem strange or weird. For example, focusing on Martin Luther King's birthday, the Navaho living in hogans, or the Japanese eating squid is inappropriate. Such an approach tends to stress what is unusual in others rather than their overall experiences, ordinary problems, and daily lives. The focus ought to be on more than a few exotic

foods, isolated living arrangements, or well-known heroes.

A further way to promote respect is to acknowledge the child's native language. Learn and use important words in the student's vocabulary. If Hispanic youngsters refer to family as *"mi familia,"* you can likewise use this expression in talking with them. Such an action shows a positive regard for the child's language. It also sugggests to all children in the classroom that their speech is honored.

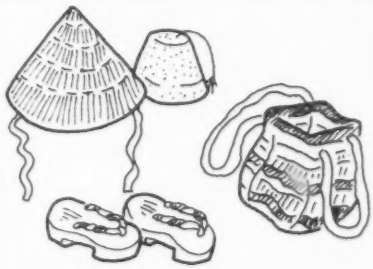
GENDER DIFFERENCES

In regard to gender, both boys and girls should be taught the value of achievement and getting along with others. These concepts are appropriate for all children, not just one sex. For example, even though girls tend to be praised more often than boys for being obedient, both groups need to be given positive feedback for minding the teacher and obeying class rules.

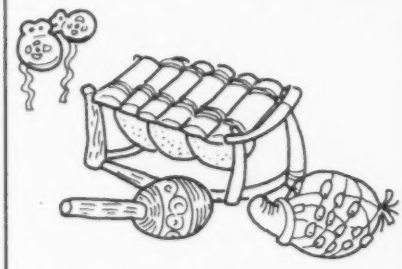
Finally, teachers should strive to create learning environments consistent with multiculturalism and the democratic ideals of freedom, cooperation, and fairness. Youngsters should feel free to ask questions or make comments about sex, race, or learning problems. Such questions could include, *"Will I change from a boy to a girl?"* or *"Can I change my skin color?"* Moreover, children need opportunities to play together and become friends. The block center, library corner, or housekeeping areas are great places for playing, getting acquainted, and cooperating. Students should also be encouraged to think for themselves and to say when they believe something is unfair.

These suggestions are just a few for today's classrooms where multiculturalism is an ever-growing reality. They will help you to create an atmosphere of goodwill for everyone.

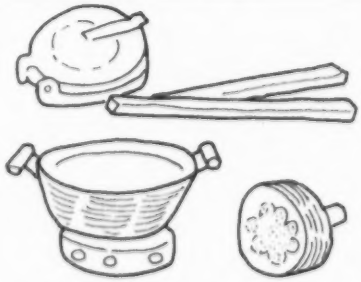
MULTICULTURAL ITEMS TO LIVEN UP YOUR CLASSROOM



DRESS-UP AREA: Hats, shoes, bags, jewelry, cloth, bags, beads



MUSIC AREA: shekeres, maracas, castanets, xylophone, bells



COOKING AREA: wok, tortilla press, chopsticks, cookie molds

GAME CENTER: mankala, matroshka dolls, tangrams, valero

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"THE WORLD IN OUR BACKYARD" DAY

by Kelly Haack

Young children first develop their concept of humanity by learning about themselves and their families. Gradually they expand their relationships to include other adults, friends, and casual acquaintances.

Around preschool age children develop a concept of personhood and are ready to explore and celebrate the similarities and differences between a variety of people. Preschoolers are concrete learners, so this is best done through intentional exposure to real people of various races, cultures, and age groups; especially those within one's own community. The best way to foster positive attitudes is to foster positive relationships.

One way to tap into the people resources in your community is by celebrating "The World in Our Backyard" Day. This special celebration brings people of various races and cultures together to help children explore and learn about other people and in the process, themselves. For the majority of the day, children visit, in small groups, a number of hands-on centers. The day ends with a program of music and drama presented by people of different backgrounds.

To start your planning for this special event, research your community. What people and groups are available for you to tap into? The families at your center, ethnic clubs and organizations, churches, businesses, and advocacy groups are good places to start. Neighborhood organizations are another place to look. Seek out both people who are willing to participate in the festivities and people who are willing to provide resource materials and background information. Be sure to involve people from all the cultures in your community.

Following are some ideas to get you started in planning the centers and activities. During the day remember to plan some down time—rest periods and free play— for children.

VISUAL ARTS CENTER

At this center, children see and touch the artwork of the community and talk to the people who made or collected the items. Include one or two simple projects children can make and take home.

SNACK CENTER

What ethnic foods are a part of your community? Asian? German? Italian? Let children taste samples. Cooks can demonstrate how they are made. Include samples of a favorite snack from your center. Even though it may not be "ethnic," it is a part of the culture of your center. To add interest, display cooking tools.

"BEAUTIFUL ME" CENTER

In this center, children compare their own physical traits to one another and discover that even though they have differences, they are all beautiful. Materials to include in this center are mirrors, dress-up costumes, a height chart, and an instant-developing camera for taking pictures. Also have poster-making materials on hand. Write the words "Beautiful Me" on a large posterboard and have children use colorful paints to make handprints. This can be displayed in the days and weeks following your celebration.

FESTIVAL CENTER

When children come to this center, they can participate in the special holiday traditions of different families. By lighting Hanukkah candles and learning about their meaning or participating in Kwanzaa traditions, children develop an appreciation of the people in those cultures.

GAMES CENTER

This center should be located in a gym, large motor area, or outside to give as much room as possible for movement. Have adults share games they remember from their childhood, from where they grew up, or games they play in their families and cultural communities. If possible, include both active and quiet games.

STORYTELLING CENTER

Invite adults to share stories of family history and life, as well as stories, such as folk tales and fairy tales, native to their culture. Encourage them to actively involve children through props, costumes, repetitive lines, and simple actions. Even having individual children play roles in the story is a positive storytelling technique. Include a display of books representing different cultures.

MUSIC CENTER

A variety of instruments that children can try out and listen to adults play will help instill in them an appreciation for the music styles of different cultures. Include not only instruments native to specific ethnic groups, but also instruments representative of a variety of music styles; classical, marching bands, jazz, and so on.

CLOSING PROGRAM

Gather all the children from your center together for a closing program that introduces a variety of performing arts; dance, drama, music, mime, tumbling with performers from your community.

FOLLOW-UP

In the days and weeks following "The World in Our Backyard" Day, review the activities through displays, art projects, and stories children dictate. As you do these activities, discuss what children learned. Remember to send a special Thank You note to each of the guest participants. This could be a project for the children. Teaching children to say, "Thank you," teaches them to show respect.

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NATIVE AMERICAN WINTER FUN

by Donna Bird

Traditionally, winter was a time for Native Americans to come together for storytelling, dances, and celebrations. These activities can also give us a break from our usual holiday and seasonal fare.

Help your students understand that most Native Americans did not have a form of written language. Storytelling was not only entertaining, but a way of passing on folktales, beliefs, and history. Consequently, storytellers were very important tribal members. Their words had to relay information as well as "paint pictures" in the minds of their listeners.

RAINBOW CROW

One such story comes from the Delaware (Lenni-Lenape) tribe of the eastern woodlands of North America. It is called *Rainbow Crow*. This myth says that crows used to have multicolored feathers. Their voices were beautiful too. In winter, all of the animals suffered because of the cold and snow. They decided that someone had to go to the Great Spirit for help. Rainbow Crow was the one to go. The Great Spirit gave him the gift of fire for the animals. But as he flew back to Earth with the flaming stick in his beak, his multicolored feathers became covered with soot, turning back. And his beautiful voice became hoarse from the ashes he swallowed.

Tell your students this abbreviated version of *Rainbow Crow*, or some other story. Ask them if they can picture the story in their minds. Discuss what is missing to make this story more interesting. Then help them retell the story. You might have them tell their story to another class, or record their new story and listen to it. Can they "see" what's happening now?

Another way that Native Americans retold their stories was through pictures. You might create a mural on a long sheet of newsprint. Assign a portion of the story to each child. Share your story with others and see if they can "read" your picture story.

Stories were sometimes told through dramatic performances. These were exciting. Some are still performed for visitors at cultural heritage centers. You might wish to retell your story with a dramatic performance. Depending on your children's age level, make simple costumes, or just cardboard masks on popsicle stick. Remember, when telling stories it is not important to use the exact words every time.

Masks

Dances are another form of winter celebrations. Native Americans in the interior Northwest held a ceremony called the Winter Spirit Dance. Dancing and spirit singing was done by those who had acquired guardian spirits, usually animals, during the preceding year.

Your students may wish to choose an animal they like, and portray that animal in a dance of their own. Help them to think about the animal's size, movements, sounds, and characteristics. Incorporate these into their dance. This is also an opportunity to use rhythm band instruments. They are also easily made and could be another fun project for your Native American winter celebration.

These activities are a good way to introduce children to other cultures and to warm up the dark and cold days of winter.

SAYING "THANK YOU" IN MANY WAYS

by Tania K. Cowling

There are many reasons to give thanks especially at this time of the year. The holiday season is abundant with gifts and invitations that need a very important gesture—a "thank you" note. Giving a "thank you" is one of the most fulfilling gifts you can give a person. It's a kind deed that makes people feel good, including the person saying the "thank you."

THE "THANK YOU" NOTE

✎ The "thank you" note is the most common way of sending your appreciation to people. The process can be quite fun and creative. Gather up paper and matching envelopes. Now, begin your search through the junk or collage bin for decorative materials for artistic notes. Look for stickers, stars, buttons, lace, trims, colored cellophane, sequins, felt, fabrics, wallpaper, and so on.

Begin by folding your paper in half. Print a cute inside or have younger children make "a picture that is worth a thousand words" (Have the child draw a picture of the people they are giving thanks to or of themselves happy.) Proceed to decorate the outside cover by drawing and gluing on decorations. When dry, address the envelopes and deliver the notes.

✎ Make postcards using index cards. Draw a picture on one side and the message and address on the other side. This will be less expensive for postage.

✎ Another idea is to cut out a cute shape from construction paper, such as a strawberry. Print the saying, "To a Berry Nice Person."

MAKE YOUR OWN STATIONARY

✎ Take paper and sponge paint designs on it.

✎ Use yarn as a line drawing tool. Glue the yarn to outline and fill in parts of the picture.

✎ Try crayon batik. Batik is a fabric design technique created by using wax and dye. You can use crayon and paper to imitate this technique. Cover the paper heavily with crayon, crunch up the paper, then smooth it out and cover it with dye. The crayon cracks when the paper is crunched, creating the spider-web look unique to batik. The dye that is painted on could be ink, fabric dye, or watered down tempera paints. This will seep into the cracks in the wax, but it will not stick to the crayon.

UNIQUE "THANK YOU" IDEAS

✎ Send a cassette tape. Make a fun recording of your thank you and send it to a friend or loved one. Add music, jokes, imitations; just a little fun from you.

✎ Bake some cookies, round or selected shapes. Attach a cute note, "Thanks to the smartest/nicest cookie I know!"

✎ Hide a "thank you" note in someone's shoes, lunchbox, under a person's pillow, etc.

✎ Make award certificates for the special people you wish to thank. These can be fun to design and decorate.

✎ Gather a bouquet of flowers from the garden and present these to the special person.

✎ Make candy cups (a small container filled with confections) and give this to the person you are thanking with a note saying "You're so sweet!"

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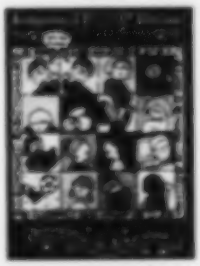

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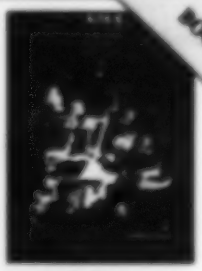

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